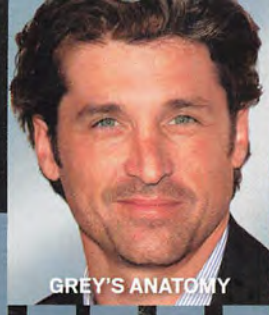
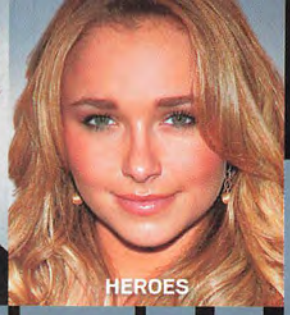
TV WINNERS & LOSERS
WHY THE NETWORKS ARE NERVOUS


GREY'S ANATOMY


HEROES

Entertainment WEEKLY

#936 • JUNE 1, 2007

"The system needs to be scrapped. I'm getting older, and you hope to see some change in your lifetime."

SNEAK PEEK AT FALL TV

THE NEW 'HARRY POTTER' VILLAIN

READERS' TOP SCI-FI PICKS

HERE COMES TROUBLE

MICHAEL MOORE

OUR PROBING Q&A WITH THE CONTROVERSIAL DIRECTOR OF 'SICKO'

www.ew.com

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- ☐ Go to the Olympic Games
- ☐ Tour MoMA with a personal guide
- ☐ Visit an uninhabited island
- ☐ Write a screenplay
- ☐ Run with the bulls in Pamplona
- ☐ Go scuba diving in Belize
- ☐ Take your parents on a vacation
- ☐ Experience Mongolia's Naadam Festival
- ☐ Bungee jump
- ☐ Read and finish *Moby-Dick*
- ☐ Swim in all five oceans
- ☐ Celebrate Mardi Gras in New Orleans
- ☐ Ride the Orient Express
- ☐ Visit the Taj Mahal
- ☐ Drive on the autobahn
- ☐ See Iguazu Falls
- ☐ Heli-ski in British Columbia
- ☐ Play Pinehurst No. 2
- ☐ Ski first tracks at Deer Valley
- ☐ Go to the Super Bowl
- ☐ **Find peace, love and understanding**

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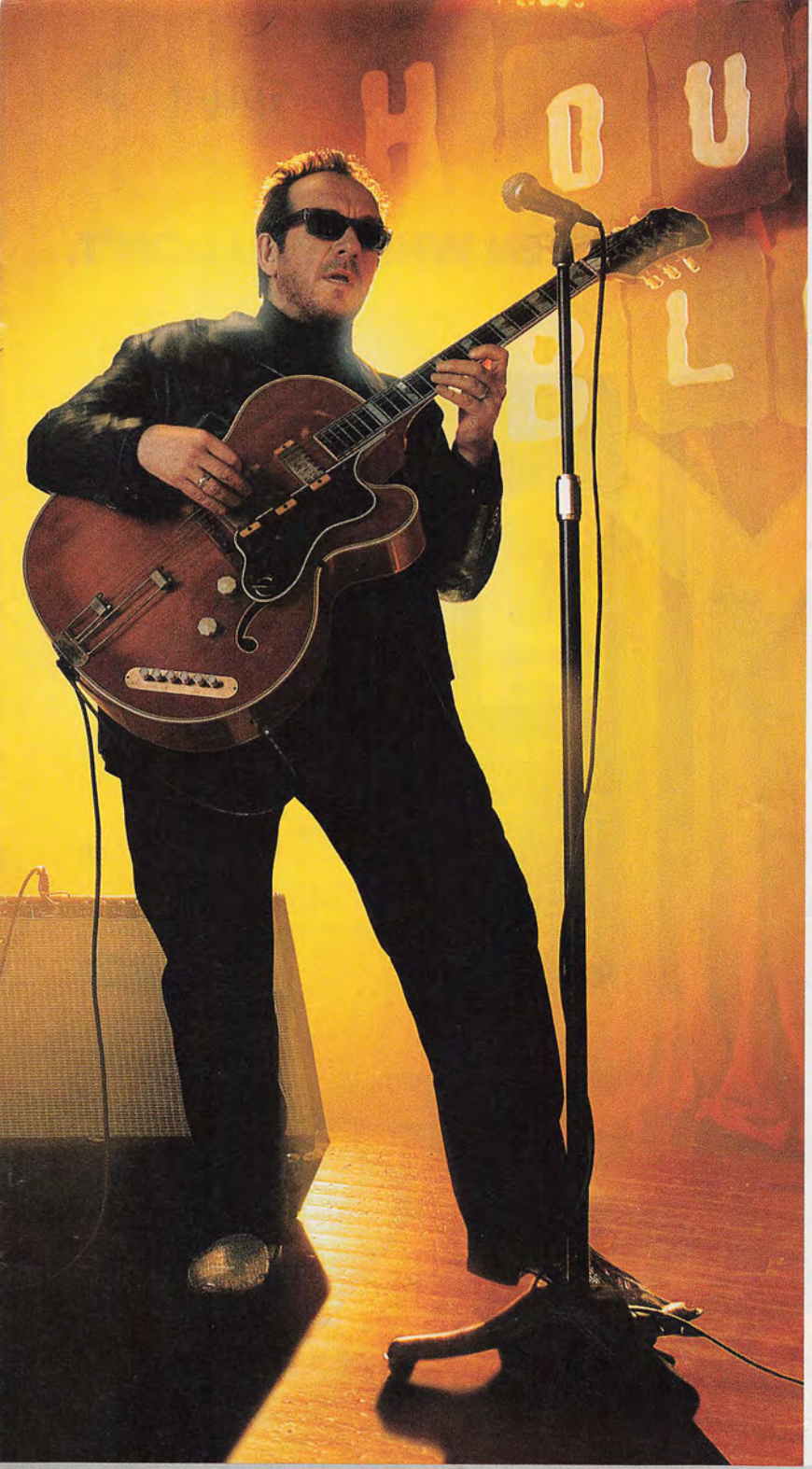

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He bashed Bush before it was a pastime. Now he hits health care with *Sicko*. Love him or hate him, there's only one Michael Moore. BY DANIEL FIERMAN

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ON THE COVER
Michael Moore photographed for EW by Martin Schoeller on May 16, 2007, in New York City

"I just want to have a nice life with my wife and kid and work on things that are fun and challenging, y'know?"
—Paul Rudd

PAGE 19

LOOKING FOR 'AMERICAN IDOL' COVERAGE?
There's so much to say about this season of TV's No. 1 show that we had to devote an entire issue to it. Watch your mailbox and newsstands for our *American Idol* special collector's edition, with details from the finale night and the scoop on your new winner.

(COVER) STYLING: APRIL JOHNSON; GROOMING: JANE CHOI/ARTWING NY. PROP STYLING: MICHAEL BEDNARK; PRODUCTION: LISA HOOPER; DEMPSEY: STEPHEN SHUGERMAN/GETTY IMAGES. PANETTIERE: MAURY PHILLIPS/WIREIMAGE.COM; (THIS PAGE) STYLING: ANNA BINGEMANN/MAGNET LA. GROOMING: RHIANNE WHITE/SEE MANAGEMENT. SUIT: COSTUME NATIONAL. SHIRT: MARC JACOBS. *AMERICAN IDOL*: FRANK MICELOTTA/GETTY IMAGES

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Feedback

Entertainment Weekly
EXCLUSIVE!
HEROES
The Insider's Guide To the Explosive Season Finale...and Beyond
THE SCI-FI 25
Our Geektastic List of the Best Movies & TV

"I salivated over all five 'Heroes' covers and filled up on every word of the story."
Tamesha Lee
Monterey, Calif.

Sci-Fi High

I salivated over all five *Heroes* covers, filled up on every word of the story ("The Bomb Squad"), and embraced an emotional high over the sci-fi top 25: *The Matrix, X-Files, Star Trek*.... I am in love.

Tamesha Lee
Monterey, Calif.

Keeping Track

WKRP in Cincinnati revolves around a radio station in the '70s! The show, as presented on DVD, may be worthy of a B+ (DVD), but isn't it important to mention that a large chunk of the original music has been cut or replaced due to music-rights issues?

Brent Fishbaugh
Congers, N.Y.

Glad Drag

Hedda Lettuce did a great job critiquing recent music-video drag kings and queens (Music). As a drag-queen connoisseur, I am always thrilled to see cross-dressing included in EW.

Anjela Price
San Diego

Last but Not Least

Mark Harris' "Summer Lovin'" (The Final Cut) was wonderful—breezy, funny, nostalgic. EW's triumvirate of end-page columnists consistently make the last word every bit as entertaining as what precedes it. Bonus points to Mark for not caring about *Star Wars*.

Scott Trampus
Pittsburgh

Judgment Day

I must concur with Ken Tucker's article regarding *24* (Television). I've been watching this season and rolling my eyes at many of the plotlines' implausibilities (do any of those cell phones ever need recharging?). But I really started to become estranged from the series when Jack killed his right-hand man, Curtis Manning. Was that necessary? This season has developed a been-there, done-that feel. I can only hope that it does not get any worse.

Carnie Lee King
Bedford Heights, Ohio

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OBSESSIVE FAN OF THE WEEK!

Cheryl Quinn (far left) of Deer Park, Wash., is not just an obsessive fan of Peter Noone's (right) from Herman's Hermits, she's a self-proclaimed "Noonatic." Along with her sister Lisa (center) and their friend Nan, the trio have "been from Washington State to Rhode Island and all parts in between" to attend Hermits gigs. Something tells us they're into something good.

MORE GREAT STORIES ONLINE EVERYDAY

EW.com
Five Fun Things Online

1. Role Call
Take a photo tour through Keira Knightley's career—including the two Elizabeths (from *Pirates* and *Pride & Prejudice*) who made her a favorite with audiences and critics.

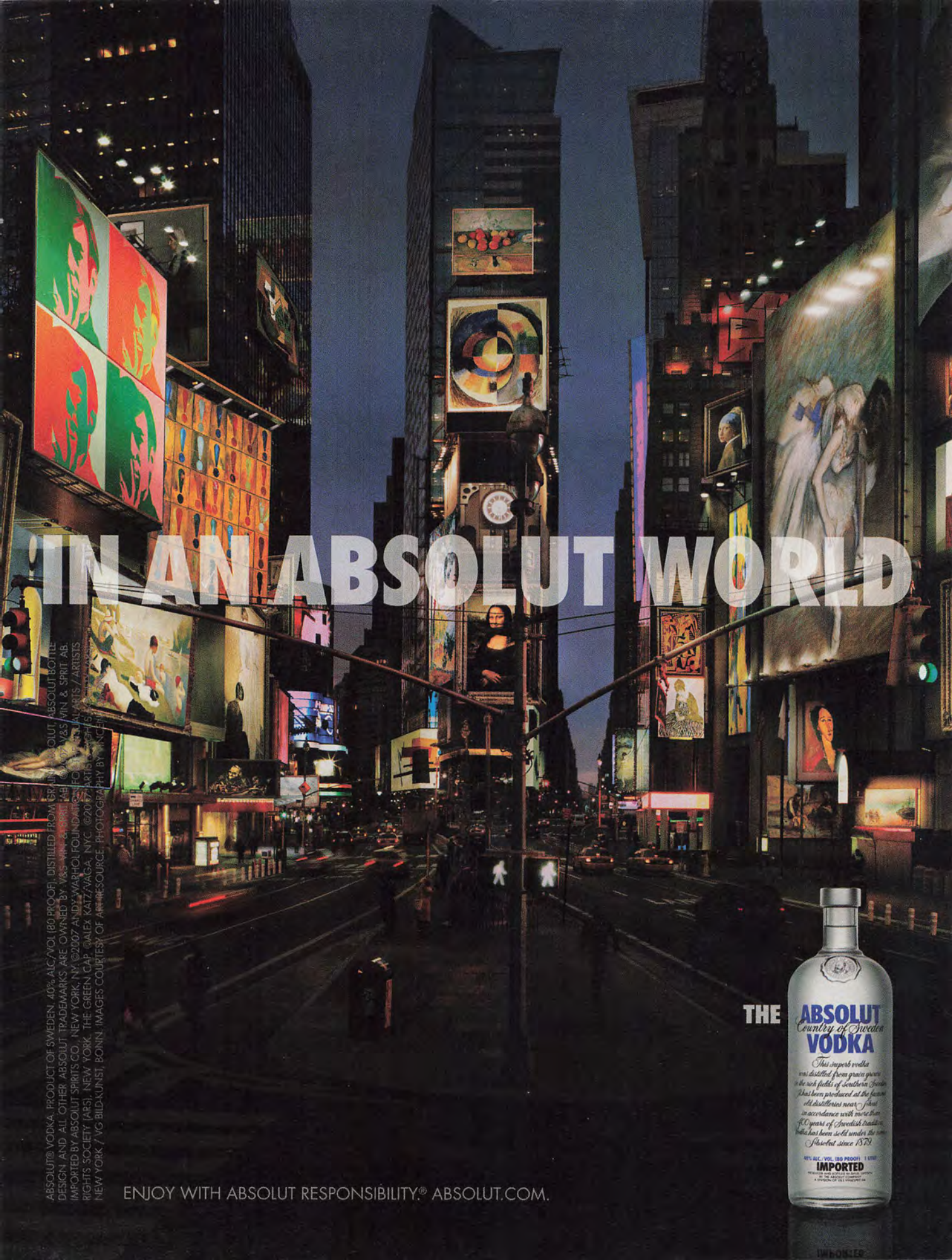
2. 'Lost' Q&A's
In shock over Wednesday's finale? Check out our interviews with Dominic Monaghan and the show's producers about the tough decisions that went into ending season 3.

3. TV Watch
Many shows are done for the summer, but *Entourage* is just heating up. Get our take on every episode.

4. On the Scene
What's it really like to attend the Cannes film festival? Go to an *American Idol* show? On EW.com's blog PopWatch, get fly-on-the-wall accounts from our intrepid team.

5. The Best Superhero?
Play our bracket game pitting Superman against other crime fighters, and see who emerges as your ultimate hero.

KNIGHTLEY: DISNEY; MONAGHAN: ART STREIBER; *ENTOURAGE*: CLAUDETTE BARIUS; SUPERMAN: EVERETT COLLECTION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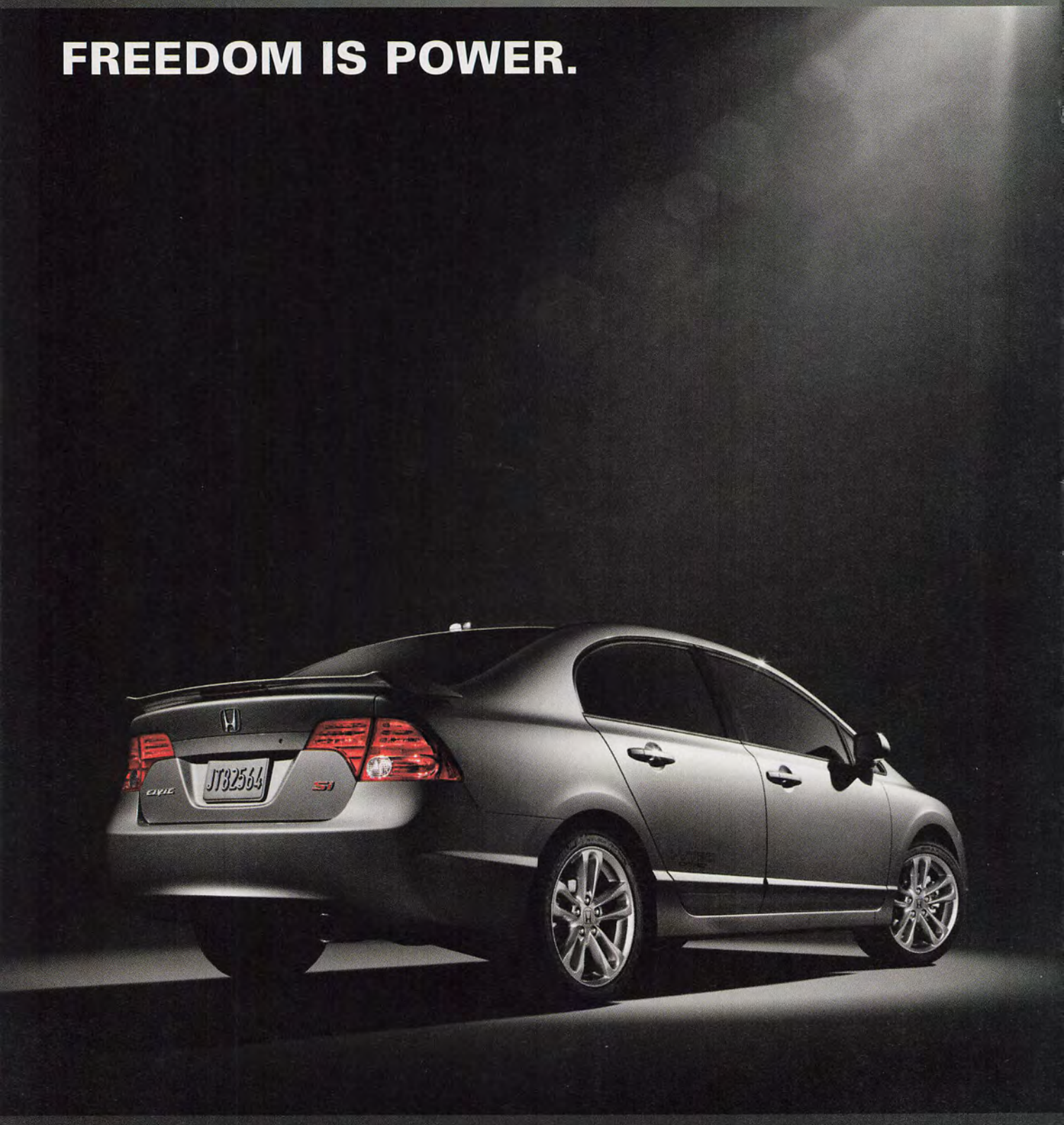

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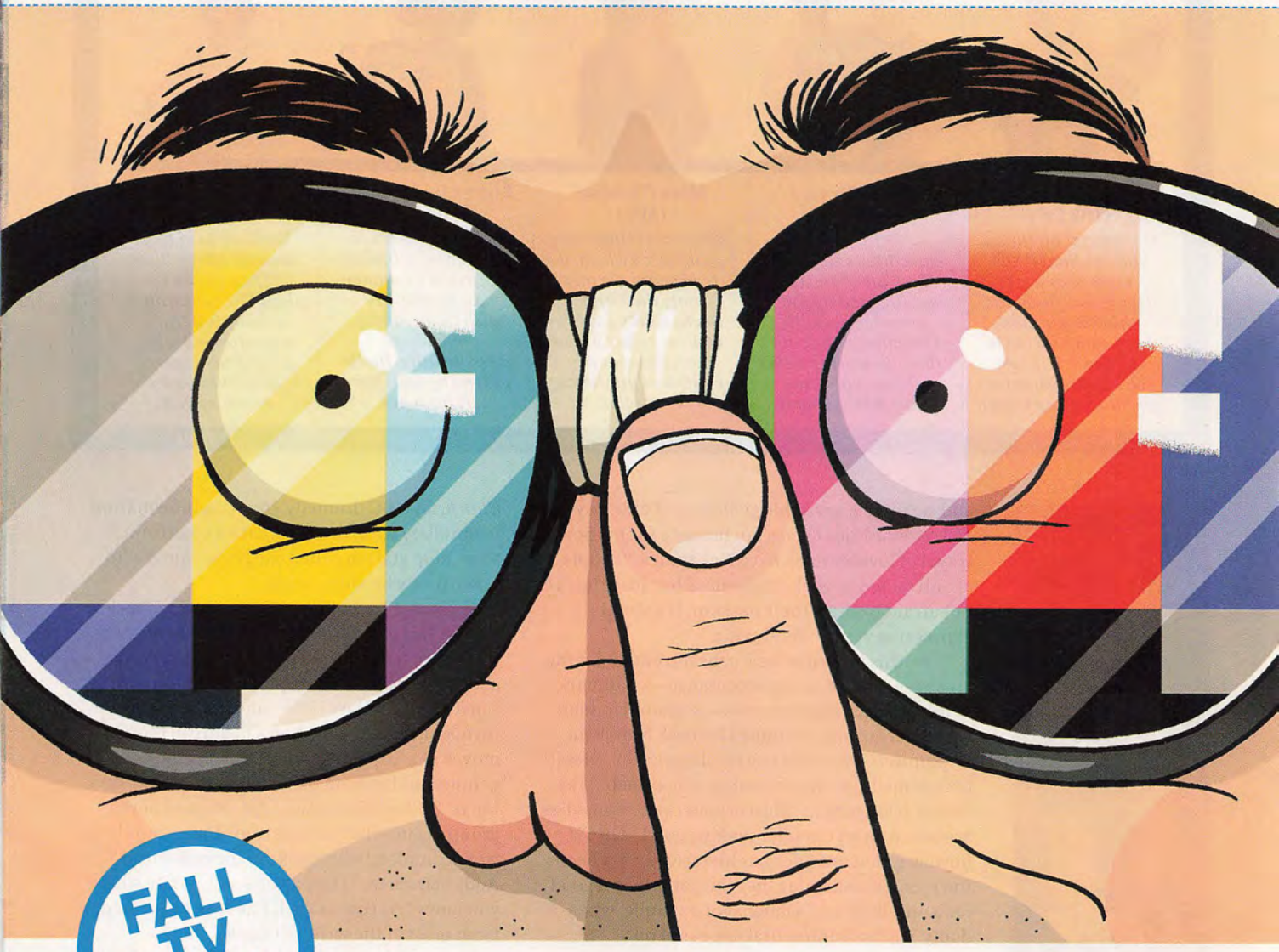
NEWS+NOTES

CANNES MID-FEST REPORT + THE NEW 'HARRY POTTER' VILLAIN + ABOUT THAT 'SUPERBAD' TRAILER... + ELIJAH WOOD = IGGY POP?



FALL TV SNEAK PEEK

Revenge of the Nerds

The geeks have officially inherited the earth—and next fall's TV schedule. Seth Cohen, your work here is done! **BY TIM STACK**

They're not particularly good-looking. They're never well dressed. And they're painfully familiar with the atomic wedgie. They're your garden-variety geeks, and as the broadcast networks prep their fall schedules, one thing we can't help noticing is...that they're taking over TV! During this year's upfronts presentations (which ran May 14–17), network presidents unveiled no fewer than six new series, from The CW's *Reaper* to CBS' *The Big Bang Theory*, that feature cool-challenged—"awesome-deficient" is another acceptable term—shlubs and their life-changing obstacles. Considering the success of shows like *The Office*, *Heroes*, and *Ugly Betty*, it's

ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT GARRETT

Geek Chorus

EW introduces a few new members of the pocket-protector posse coming to TV next season. —Tim Stack

Reaper
(THE CW)
*On his 21st birthday, slacker **Sam** ('The Loop' star Bret Harrison) finds out that his parents have sold his soul to the devil. His new job? Bounty hunter for Satan (Ray Wise)!*

The IT Crowd
(NBC)
*Office tech specialists **Roy** and **Moss** (Joel McHale and Richard Ayoade) are wizards with computers—but not their co-workers—in this adaptation of the BBC comedy.*

Miss/Guided
(ABC)
*After surviving some painfully awkward teen years, former ugly duckling **Becky** (Judy Greer) returns to her alma mater as a newly confident guidance counselor.*

Aliens in America
(THE CW)
*When his mother accidentally invites a Muslim exchange student to live with their family, friendless Wisconsinite **Justin** (played by Dan Byrd) gains a pal.*

Chuck
(NBC)
*Zachary Levi (last seen on ABC's 'Less Than Perfect') plays IT drone **Chuck**, whose dull life is transformed when government secrets are downloaded into his brain.*

"We thought of them as beautiful minds—without the paranoid schizophrenia."
—'The Big Bang Theory' co-creator Chuck Lorre

adding up to a veritable geek coup d'état. Says *Heroes* star Masi Oka, a fan favorite for his portrayal of lovable dork Hiro Nakamura, "People are attracted to geeks these days because they're not afraid to show their passion. It's about expressing your individuality."

Now, this is hardly the freshest trend to hit the airwaves. The quest for acceptance—a hallmark of many geek-centric stories—is age-old fodder for writers in any medium. (Just ask Napoleon Dynamite. Or for that matter, Jane Eyre.) As self-proclaimed geek Kevin Smith, who directed the *Reaper* pilot, puts it: "Most of your classic comedies are based on an outsider making good." On TV, however, that outsider has historically not been the protagonist, but rather the pathetic pal good for a one-liner and a laugh. For example, when doofy Walter Denton first appeared on *Our Miss Brooks* in 1952 (ask your parents), he paved the way for decades of dweebs like Arnold Horshack, Steve Urkel, and Screech Powers.

There's one dork in particular that you can thank (or is it blame?) for this latest shift: Seth Cohen, the fanboy who became the breakout star of Fox's *The O.C.* when it premiered in 2003. This, despite the fact that the network was hesitant to even use him in the teen soap's marketing materials. "In the beginning, it was not a character that the network really embraced," says creator Josh Schwartz. "We kept being told, 'Find your Luke Perry! Who's your Jason Priestley?' And we were like, That's not [what] we want to do anymore." His instincts paid off—one of Schwartz's two new fall series is *Chuck*, an NBC dramedy about an information technology whiz (he works at an electronics-store help station called the Nerd Herd) who unwittingly becomes a spy.

And exactly what inspired producer Chuck Lorre (*Two and a Half Men*) and creative partner Bill Prady (*Gilmore Girls*) to dream up *Theory*, about two drips (Jim Parsons and Johnny Galecki, left) whose lives—and hormones—are turned upside down when a beautiful blonde moves in next door? Guess. "Bill is kind of a genius and I'm kind of socially awkward," says Lorre. "When [Bill] was in his 20s, he knew a group of guys that were extraordinary minds but were completely ill at ease in the real world." Adds Schwartz: "They always say, 'Write what you know.' As cool as Jack Bauer is, he's a far cry from most of the writers I know."

It's possible this glut of dweebilicious shows—like serialized dramas, single-gal-in-the-city sitcoms, and prime-time newsmagazines before them—will eventually wear out their welcome. Heck, given the rough prime-time landscape, it's possible they may not live to see their second seasons. But it's doubtful that the geek story arc will ever completely lose its appeal—whether it's told through the eyes of a glammed-up guidance counselor (see: ABC's midseason comedy *Miss/Guided*) or a shaggy-haired Wisconsin teenager (see: The CW's *Aliens in America*). Says Lorre: "Feeling like you're outside looking in and that everybody knows the rules of the game but you has become a universal sentiment." Kinda like how it felt to get your first atomic wedgie. ■

REAPER: MICHAEL COURTNEY; *THE IT CROWD*: MITCHELL HAASETH; *MISS/GUIDED*: DANNY FELD; *ALIENS IN AMERICA*: TRAE PATTON; *CHUCK*: CHRIS HASTON; *THE BIG BANG THEORY*: GREG GAYNE

A Mighty Heart's Angelina Jolie with Brad Pitt

FRENCH CONNECTION

It was looking like a subdued 60th for the glamorous Cannes film festival. Then the lights went down. BY MISSY SCHWARTZ

"Cannes is like fight week in Vegas: all these people waiting around for something big to happen," said Chris Rock at the 60th annual film festival, where he and costar Jerry Seinfeld presented footage from DreamWorks' animated *Bee Movie*. Boy, did Rock nail it—at least as far as nightlife on the Croisette goes. Save for U2's mini-concert on the Palais des Festivals steps, by the midpoint of this year's gathering (which runs May 16–27), the only sign that the world's most glamorous celebration of cinema had reached a milestone was a fireworks display over the Mediterranean. Pretty? *Oui*. Unforgettable? *Non!*

Thank God, then, for the movies, which, after a tepid opening-night premiere for the Norah Jones–Jude Law road-trip romance *My Blueberry Nights*, began to stir up some buzz. Two hugely anticipated, headline-making projects—Michael Moore's health-care doc *Sicko* (see story, page 28) and *A Mighty Heart*, starring Angelina Jolie as Mariane Pearl—bowed to largely positive reviews. And at press time, the most talked-about film competing for the Palme d'Or was the Coen brothers' *No Country for Old Men*. (For a look at three films that had critics and audiences chattering the loudest, see below.) The ultraviolent drama starring Tommy Lee Jones, Javier Bardem, and Josh Brolin screened on May 18 and quickly launched speculation that the filmmaking *frères* could bag the top prize, which they last won in 1991 for *Barton Fink*. Were the nine-time Cannes vets excited by the prospect of more honors? Displaying the trademark Coen cool, younger sibling Ethan said: "It's nice that it played well. It's just...being here again feels oddly routine." *(Additional reporting by Daniel Fierman)*

No Country for Old Men
In this taut adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's novel, a drug runner (Javier Bardem) terrorizes a small Texas town.

The Orphanage
Pan's Labyrinth **visionary Guillermo del Toro exec-produced this scary Spanish flick about kiddie ghosts.**

A Mighty Heart
A docu-style drama with Angelina Jolie as the widow of Daniel Pearl, the *Wall Street Journal* reporter tragically beheaded in Pakistan in 2002.

HITLIST

By Scott Brown

1 **Reese Witherspoon's soon-to-be ex Ryan Phillippe seeks joint custody...** *of the couple's shared "hair shaman."*

2 **Donald Trump "moving on" to "major new TV venture" post-*Apprentice*** *Vowed Trump: "I'm gonna watch, like, all of 'Next Generation,' end-to-end."*

3 **Avoiding Chihuahua, Paula Abdul falls, breaks nose** *As if it weren't hard enough to be Paula Abdul's Chihuahua before—now it has to live with the guilt.*

4 **Jessica Simpson and John Mayer's relationship reportedly a roller coaster** *Some couples just don't have that Marilyn Manson–Evan Rachel Wood staying power.*

5 **Michael Jackson won't block auction of his personal effects** *If you love Liz Taylor's original hip, let it go free. If it comes back to you, destroy it—it's haunted.*

6 **Anne Heche denies "delusional behavior"** *"It's a complete fabrication," she says. "I have over 100 imaginary witnesses."*

7 **Tom Cruise reportedly buys mansion in Katie Holmes' native Ohio** *Plus all adjoining states, to set up a buffer zone.*

8 **Jennifer Tilly says *Bride of Chucky* damaged her indie cred** *I think we all lost a little indie cred that day, Jen.*

9 **Addams Family coming to Broadway** *With Betty Buckley as Thing!*

10 **Nick Carter named "U.N. Special Ambassador of the Year of the Dolphin"** *Don't tell Nick, but that's just what it says on the paper hat they give you at Mr. Chow.*

For all the latest headlines, pictures, and ridiculous Hollywood miscellany, visit popwatch.ew.com

JOLIE AND PITT: GARETH CATTERMOLE/GETTY IMAGES; NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN: RICHARD FOREMAN; A MIGHTY HEART: PETER MOUNTAIN; SIMPSON AND MAYER: MICHAEL CAULFIELD/SONY BMG MUSIC/WIREIMAGE.COM; TILLY: JEFF SNYDER/FILMMAGIC.COM

INTRODUCING

BELLATRIX LESTRANGE

Helena Bonham Carter made her name playing genteel, upper-crust Brits. Now she's sending up that whole patrician thing as Bellatrix Lestrange, the psychopathic Death Eater who makes her debut in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (out July 13). Here's the scoop on Bella from Bonham Carter herself:

Who's That Lady?

Imprisoned for 14 years in the wizarding world's time-out stronghold, Azkaban, Bellatrix escapes (left) to serve the evil resurrected Lord Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes). "She's very sick," says Bonham Carter. "She's a sadist. And a racist, obsessed with blood purity—like Adolf."

Getting the Part

Helen McCrory (who played Tony Blair's wife, Cherie, in *The Queen*) was initially cast as Bella but got pregnant and dropped out. Her substitute is ever so grateful: "I've got to thank her. In fact, I've got to thank her husband [actor Damian Lewis] for impregnating her."

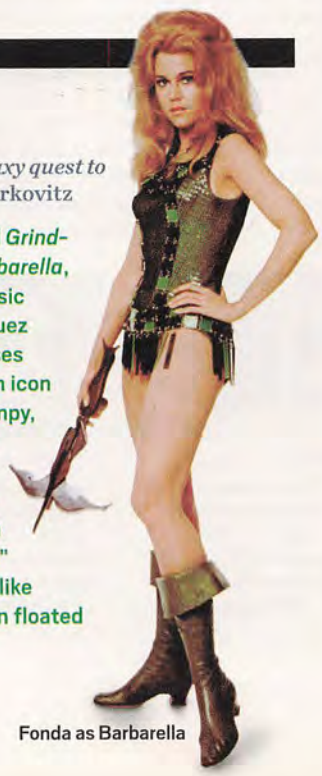
Shaping the Look

For much of the film, Bellatrix wears a slinky, stitched-together black ensemble that's seen better days—think Catwoman after a bender. "I wanted her to be sort of falling apart at the seams, literally," says Bonham Carter. "She's very aristocratic, very posh. But there's a *Sunset Boulevard* thing going on." —*Steve Daly*

MISS UNIVERSE

All systems are go as director Robert Rodriguez signs on for a galaxy quest to bring sexy sci-fi icon Barbarella back from the future. —Adam Markovitz

She's back! Producers Martha and Dino De Laurentiis have tapped *Grindhouse* codirector Robert Rodriguez to helm a "reimagining" of *Barbarella*, the comic-book series that inspired Roger Vadim's 1968 cult classic starring Jane Fonda as the intergalactic sex kitten. Seems Rodriguez was looking to make a splashy blockbuster when the De Laurentiises approached him about updating the character, who has become an icon in the 39 years since her big-screen debut. "It's not going to be campy, but definitely sensual and sexual," says Martha, who anticipates an R rating and a summer 2008 release for the film, which already has a script. (*Casino Royale* scribes Neal Purvis and Robert Wade have written a draft based on Jean-Claude Forest's comic, though there's still no word on whether the infamous "Excessive Machine" will appear.) While Martha is mum on casting updates, big names like Drew Barrymore, Kate Beckinsale, and Lindsay Lohan have all been floated in recent years. Of course, there's always Rose McGowan...



Fonda as Barbarella

Brotherly Love

Has it really been 10 years since Hanson's "MMMBop" topped the charts? And did *American Idol*'s Jordin Sparks *really* declare that it's her favorite song? Well, hey, she's not the only one! EW proudly presents a number-crunching homage to the twee-est of tunes. —*Tanner Stransky*

40 ESTIMATED LENGTH, *in inches, of Isaac, Taylor, and Zac Hanson's golden locks combined—circa 1997*

9 HIGHEST SPOT *reached by 'Hanson: The Official Book' on a 'New York Times' best-seller list in 1998*

$16K AMOUNT *Ozzy Osbourne forked over to a charity that same year so his daughters could hang out with the boys for a day*

38 NUMBER OF TIMES *the word "bop" pops up in "MMMBop"*

44.8 MILLIONS OF TIMES *you'd hear that word if you played "MMMBop" on a loop for 10 years straight*

HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX: MURRAY CLOSE; HANSON: MICHAEL LAVINE; OSBOURNE: NEAL PRESTON/RETNA; RECORD PLAYER: LAWRENCE MANNING/CORBIS; BARBARELLA: PARAMOUNT PICTURES/PHOTOFEST

SOME PEOPLE SAY
SEX IS BETTER
THAN CHOCOLATE.
BUT IS SEX BETTER
THAN CHOCOLATE
AND PEANUT BUTTER?
Reese's
perfect.

BEYOND THE 'CREEK'

EW tracks down Capeside's angsty alums four years after they moved away from 'Dawson's Creek'—just as creator Kevin Williamson debuts his new adolescent drama, 'Hidden Palms' (premiering May 30 on The CW). BY LINDSAY SOLL

1 KATIE HOLMES After taking time off to, oh, marry Tom Cruise, have daughter Suri, and become a tabloid staple, onetime tomboy Joey is back in action. Holmes is filming the comedy *Mad Money* with Queen Latifah, in which they play Federal Reserve employees plotting an inside job.

2 JAMES VAN DER BEEK A TV series comeback was blocked after ABC sacked his *Football Wives* pilot, but the former Dawson has other gigs on his game plan: He'll portray a scientist in the Sci Fi Channel movie *Eye of the Beast* and a screenwriter in the thriller *Final Draft*.

3 MICHELLE WILLIAMS Troubled Jen finally found success. Up next for Oscar nominee Williams: starring as Edie Sedgwick in the Bob Dylan biopic *I'm Not There* (out Sept. 21) and as Ewan McGregor's paramour in both the forthcoming thriller *The Tourist* and the romance *Incendiary*.

4 JOSHUA JACKSON Has the wisecracking Pacey matured? We'll say! Jackson will take on the role of a protest-group leader in the big-screen *Battle in Seattle* (out in December), written and directed by costar Charlize Theron's boyfriend, Stuart Townsend.

Elijah Wood Gets Iggy With It

Say it ain't so, Frodo! News that cuddly Elijah Wood will play sinewy punk god Iggy Pop in the indie biopic *The Passenger* has us feeling blah, blah, blah. The film—based on Pop's early years in the music biz as frontman for the Stooges—is a coup for rock wonk Wood, who moonlights as CEO of fledgling record label Simian and has long expressed interest in playing Pop. (Iggy will have no official role in the film.) But the '70s punk scene is a long way from Middle-earth. Even if the wee actor can physically transform himself into a scraggly-haired stage dynamo, mastering those powerful vocals may prove harder. And while Pop was prone to cutting himself and lewdly freaking his mic in public, clean-cut Wood isn't exactly known for spectacular lapses in good judgment. Unless you count that time he agreed to star in the 1994 kid-flick stinker *North*. —Karen Leigh

DAWSON'S CREEK: FRANK OCKENFELS; HOLMES: PHIL MCCARTEN/REUTERS/LANDOV; VAN DER BEEK: MILAN RYBA/LANDOV; WILLIAMS: JEFF VESPA/PHOTOMEDIA.COM; JACKSON: JANA DE SOUSA/REUTERS/LANDOV; WOOD: GREGORIO BINUYA/REUTERS/LANDOV

From left: *Superbad*'s Christopher Mintz-Plasse, Jonah Hill, and Michael Cera

Risqué Business

As the raunchy, Internet-only trailer for 'Superbad' garners big laughs, Hollywood marketers consider playing dirty again. **BY NICOLE SPERLING**

What's the point of marketing a good old-fashioned sex romp if you can't sell the sex? That's the conundrum Sony and Universal faced when it came to advertising the ribald and often vulgar humor of their two upcoming Judd Apatow comedies, *Superbad* and *Knocked Up*, respectively. Their solution: Create racy, age-restricted "red band" trailers—named after the ominous crimson MPAA advisory that precedes them—and premiere them on the films' official websites. This way, they avoided offending sensitive moviegoers and built a new kind of buzz.

Red-band trailers are essentially R-rated sneak peeks, and they sporadically preceded R-rated movies before the FTC chastised Hollywood in 2000 for marketing mature content to children. Since then, they've been all but abandoned by studios. That's because theater chains refuse to play them for fear they'll be seen by the wrong audiences due to, say, a projectionist's mistake.

But the sudden popularity of these new trailers could spell a red-band resurgence. And strangely enough, the MPAA may be responsible: In the last year, the film-ratings organization has turned studios onto companies providing age-verification technology, which forces those interested in watching a red-band trailer online to enter their name, birth date, and zip code. And fooling the system is difficult, because the companies search against public records, including DMV data, to determine that visitors are who they say they are. "[It] allows us to be responsible, and puts the onus on the consumer," says Dwight Caines, an executive VP at Sony who's now creating red bands for fall releases *The Brothers Solomon* (starring Will Arnett) and *Resident Evil: Extinction*.

Still, some studios, like Warner Bros., simply won't make them, arguing that it's not effective to produce a trailer that will only be seen by a limited number of moviegoers. Others, like Universal, are just miffed that these trailers have been ghettoized to the Internet in the first place. "I'm not suggesting every red-band trailer should be played with every R-rated movie," says Universal marketing prez Adam Fogelson. "But if *Wedding Crashers* were playing today, the idea that a red-band trailer for *Knocked Up* or *Superbad* couldn't get play with that seems wholly illogical." ■

The Shaw Report *By Jessica Shaw*

IN	FIVE MINUTES AGO	OUT
Periodic-table design	*Bird motifs*	*Gun art*
Pocket scarves	*Ties*	*Ascots*
Boiled peanuts	*Spicy almonds*	*Candied pecans*

DEAL REPORT

MOVIES

✚ Family woman **Julia Roberts** will star in an untitled drama about Joan Root, the wildlife conservationist murdered in Kenya last year. Says

ROBERTS

producer **Tim Bevan**, who last worked with Roberts on 1999's *Notting Hill*: "It's *Out of Africa* meets *The Constant Gardener*."

✚ *300*'s **Gerard Butler** will drop the sword to play a scientist dad in *Nim's Island*, based on the kids' book. "It's this fantastical tale set on a little island in the middle of nowhere, where a girl lives with her father," he explains. *Little Miss Sunshine*'s **Abigail Breslin** plays his daughter, and **Jodie Foster** appears as her pen pal, a reclusive writer.

✚ The indie thriller *Righteous Kill* will reunite **Robert De Niro** and **Al Pacino** for the first time

PACINO

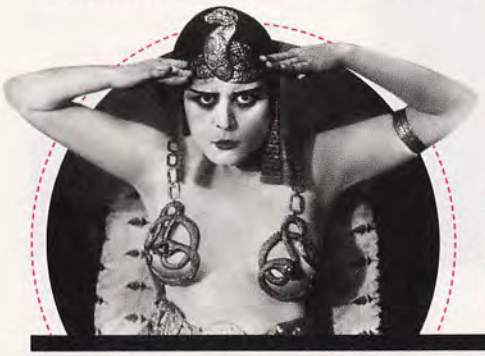
since 1995's *Heat*. We can hardly contain ourselves! Unfortunately, tight-lipped director **Jon Avnet** can: "They're both cops, and they're buddies." Oooh, like a buddy-cop movie? "Let me put it this way: You're going to smile." —*Vanessa Juarez, with additional reporting by Adam B. Vary*

SUPERBAD: MELISSA MOSELEY; ROBERTS: STEVE GRANITZ/WIREIMAGE.COM; PACINO: STEPHEN SHUGERMAN/GETTY IMAGES

Style

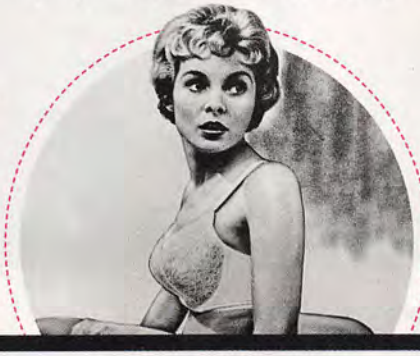
NOTES FROM THE UNDERGARMENT

Ah, **THE BRA**. Once upon a time, a scintillating cinematic peep was all we got. But this spring, discretion has given way to cups that not only runneth over, they seem purposefully bold, bawdy, and made to be seen-eth. Below, the breast (sorry!) and brightest of the support system's pop culture evolution. And may we just say (again, with apologies), thanks for the mammaries! BY LEAH GREENBLATT



Theda Bara, 1917

In pre–Hays Code Hollywood, the silent-film femme fatale was able to—if not grin—nearly bare it all in naughty fare like *Siren of Hell*, *The Eternal Sappho*, and, here, *Cleopatra*.



Janet Leigh, 1960

Before she met her end at the Bates Motel, Leigh, as *Psycho*'s Marion Crane, showed a scandalous amount of flesh (yes, it looks like a maternity bra now) in an opening scene.

Susan Sarandon, 1975

Dr. Frank-N-Furter may have been the sweet transvestite, but all eyes were on Sarandon as Janet Weiss, the good girl with the surprisingly bodacious bosom. Dammit, Janet!

Madonna, 1985

She would go on to celebrate her considerable assets with tassels, sequins, and, most famously, fabric cones, but the underwear-as-outerwear trend all began with a little lace.

Julia Roberts, 2000

Roberts scored an Oscar for playing single mom/paralegal Erin Brockovich, whose tenacity in fighting the Man was equal only to her fabulously office-inappropriate cleavage.

Sarah Jessica Parker, 2002

Of all the sartorial trends kick-started by *Sex and the City* (nameplate necklaces, anyone?), the visible, contrasting bra may be the most enduring. Long live tacky-chic!

Lindsay Lohan, 2007

Nothing makes people stop talking about your hair color, your career choices, or your love life better than playing a game of "Whoopsy! Looks like I forgot to button up!"

Britney Spears, 2007

In "...Baby One More Time," a then-17-year-old Spears wore a hot-pink sports bra. Recently, the now-mother-of-two performed live in...a hot-pink bra. Oh, the circle of life.

Amy Winehouse, 2007

In the wake of SJP, Gwen Stefani, and other I-see-London-I-see-France fashionistas, Brit soul sensation Winehouse often provides on-purpose peeks at her undergoodies.

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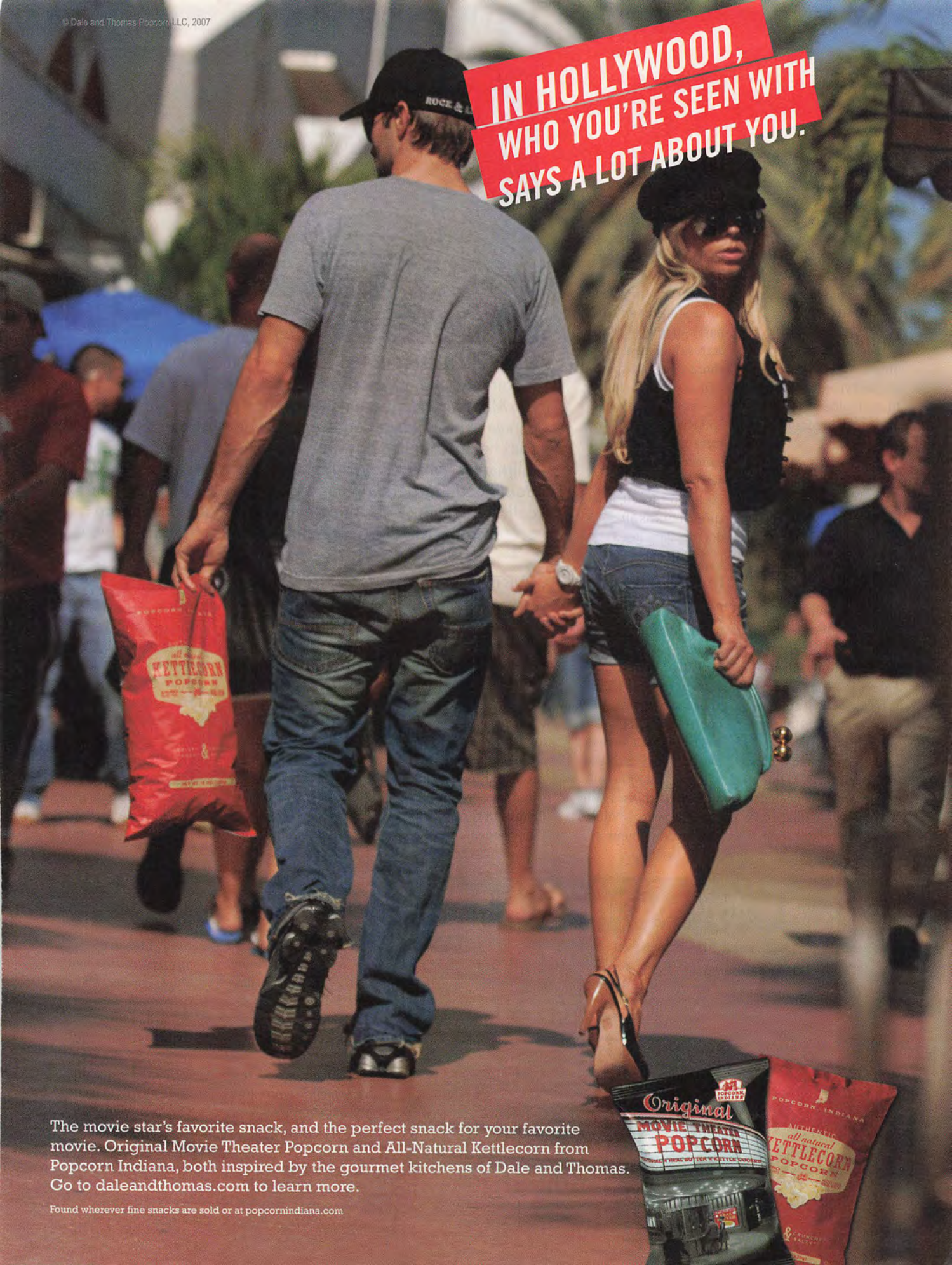

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Monitor

ENGAGED

Kate Walsh (*Grey's Anatomy*), 39, will tie the knot with Fox movie exec Alex Young, 35.

MARRIED

Singer Amy Winehouse, 23, wed video director Blake Fielder-Civil, 25, on May 18 in Miami.

BIRTH

Jon Heder (*Blades of Glory*), 29, and his wife, Kirsten, welcomed their first child, daughter Evan Jane, last month.

AILING

Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Bo Diddley, 78, is recovering in an Omaha hospital after suffering a stroke on May 13. Although the singer-guitarist's summer tour was canceled, his business manager says "he's progressing very well."... Jenna Fischer (*The Office*), 33, was hospitalized in NYC with four broken bones in her back after falling down some stairs at an NBC party on May 14. The actress has been discharged and is expected to make a full recovery in time to shoot new episodes of *The Office* this summer.... The cancer that plagued actress Farrah Fawcett, 60, has returned, just three months after doctors gave her a clean bill of health.

DEPARTURE

On May 22, NBC announced *Dateline* coanchor Stone Phillips, 52, will be leaving the show at the end of June after the network opted not to renew his contract. He won't be replaced, and Ann Curry will remain as the sole anchor. "It's been a wonderful 15 years," Phillips said in a statement.

LEGACY

CARL WRIGHT *1932–2007*

A comedy-club veteran who appeared in Hollywood hits like *Big Momma's House* and *Barbershop* (above), Wright died of cancer at his Chicago home May 19. "He had thousands of jokes that he could tell at any given time," recalls director George Tillman Jr., who gave Wright his first big-screen role in 1997's *Soul Food*. *Barbershop* costar Ice Cube agrees: "Rappers call themselves MCs, but we all could learn from a true professional MC like Carl Wright." —*Simon Vozick-Levinson*

COURTS

Ryan Phillippe (*Crash*), 32, has requested joint custody of his two children with Reese Witherspoon, 31 (*Walk the Line*). The actress asked for physical custody of the kids when she filed for divorce in November.... Cameraman Coley Laffoon, 33, who filed for divorce from actress Anne Heche (*Men in Trees*), 38, in February, is now seeking at least $33,000 a month in spousal support and primary custody of the couple's 5-year-old son. In court papers, he claims Heche is unfit to raise the child due to "bizarre and delusional behavior." Said Heche's rep: "Laffoon has resorted to filing lies with the court because Anne would not cave in to his astronomical monetary demands."... Former Creed frontman Scott Stapp, 33, spent a night in a West Palm Beach, Fla., jail on May 20 after allegedly throwing a bottle at his wife, model Jaclyn Nesheiwat. The singer is expected to appear in court June 22. Says Stapp's lawyer, "Scott is not guilty."... On May 21, Lane Garrison (*Prison Break*), 27, pleaded guilty to vehicular manslaughter and DUI charges, stemming from a December 2006 crash that killed one of his teen passengers and injured two others. Garrison, whose sentencing is scheduled for Aug. 2, may face more than six years in an L.A. prison.

DEATHS

Actress/producer/activist Yolanda King, 51, the eldest child of Martin Luther King Jr., who portrayed Rosa Parks in the 1978 miniseries *King*, of unknown causes, May 15, in Santa Monica.... Terry Ryan, 60, who wrote *The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio*, which was later turned into a 2005 movie, of cancer, May 16, in San Francisco. —*Lindsay Soll, with additional reporting by Alice Lee Tebo*

A Hollywood Cha Cha Cha

On May 17, Mexican directors and pals Alfonso Cuarón (*Children of Men*), Guillermo del Toro (*Pan's Labyrinth*), and Alejandro González Iñárritu (*Babel*) announced a business venture called cha cha cha. This five-feature, reportedly $100 million deal with Universal Pictures and Focus Features International will produce a movie from each helmer, as well as one from both Rodrigo García (*Nine Lives*) and Alfonso's brother, Carlos Cuarón. "We wanted to be involved with these filmmakers," says Universal International president David Kosse. "Spanish-language films in Mexico can do the kind of business a summer tentpole can." First up: Carlos Cuarón's soccer film *Rudo y Cursi*, with Gael García Bernal (left). —*Nicole Sperling*

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SPOTLIGHT

PAUL RUDD

Comedy's go-to guy improvises his next career move. BY ARI KARPEL

Paul Rudd wouldn't be where he is today if it weren't for Gern Blanston. Rudd was a kid when he first met Blanston. Worshipped him like a god. Still does.

Yeah, just knowing Blanston has opened some sweet doors for Rudd. In fact, the guy gave Rudd his first in with

PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN PATRICE O'BRIEN

Leslie Mann with Rudd in *Knocked Up*

writer-director-producer Judd Apatow (*The 40 Year-Old Virgin*). "A friend of mine told me that Judd's e-mail address was Gern Blanston," recalls Rudd, between sips of coffee at a sidewalk table in Manhattan's meatpacking district. (Sorry, comedy fans: Apatow's e-mail address has since been changed.) "I wrote to him because if Gern Blanston was his e-mail name, that's someone I want to hang with." Never mind that the guy doesn't actually exist: Steve Martin used to joke that his real name was Gern Blanston—and now, in certain circles, just mentioning the nerdy moniker is akin to busting out a secret comedy-fraternity handshake.

Rudd's always known the handshake, but thanks to his work over the past few years—*Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy*, *The 40 Year-Old Virgin*, and even *Night at the Museum*—he's now a full-fledged member of the frat. On June 1, the 38-year-old actor will support his comedy brothers again, as the seemingly perfect but secretly panicked husband in Apatow's *Knocked Up*, starring Seth Rogen and Katherine Heigl. Even though early reviews indicate the comedy could be a *Virgin*-size sleeper hit, Rudd expects to maintain his relative anonymity. "I'm 'that guy from *Clueless*,'" he says, adding that fans of *Friends* (on which he played Lisa Kudrow's boyfriend-turned-husband) often greet him with a "Hey, how's Phoebe?" And having witnessed the alternative—his Broadway costar Julia Roberts getting mobbed daily outside 2006's *Three Days of Rain*—Rudd's perfectly happy being "kind of on the outside a little bit."

He may not be the lead in any of Apatow's improvisational comedies, but Rudd finds that making them is more like shooting indies than the usual big-studio fare. (And he loves himself a good indie: He stars in *Diggers*, a 1970s tale of Long Island clammers, out now; the summer rom-com *I Could Never Be Your Woman* with Michelle Pfeiffer; and August's Sundance fave *The Ten* with Winona Ryder.) "With *40 Year-Old Virgin*," says Rudd, "we would improvise stuff and shoot it before we shot the movie, and then some of those things would work their way into the script." Apatow says he also made use of Rudd's brain while writing *Knocked Up*: "I called and asked, 'What about you really irritates your wife?' He admitted he never read the baby books when his wife was pregnant." (As a result, Rogen's Ben Stone lets the baby books go unopened in their shopping bag.)

Rudd and his wife of four years, Julie, 38, "a full-time mom," live in the West Village with their son, Jack, 2. A typical day for Rudd and his child? Choosing tunes for their air-guitar sessions. "He loves Loudon Wainwright III. He's really into the Shins' new record. Last week he was terrified of a Nickelback song, and now he loves it," he continues. "Though I don't admit that readily." The actor, who was raised in Overland Park, Kan., has his priorities very clear: "I just want to have a nice life with my wife and kid and work on things that are fun and challenging, y'know?"

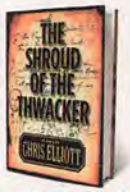
As an Apatow regular, he's doing just that. After being e-mail buddies for a while, the two finally met at Rudd's *Anchorman* audition. The riff-laden rapport was instant. "It's like he was a 14-year-old Asian girl who'd just come to the country for the first time," recalls Rudd, joking about their pen-pal relationship. "Welcome to the States! Here's some blue jeans. Check it out: rock & roll music!" They've been goofing off together ever since, and Rudd just shot cameos in two more of Apatow's productions. In *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*, written by *How I Met Your Mother*'s Jason Segel, Rudd plays "a surf instructor whose head has hit the waves a few too many times," says Apatow. And in the rock-biopic parody *Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story*, Rudd appears alongside star John C. Reilly as—wait for it—John Lennon. "I don't think you can feel much more pressure than that," he says. "Even though it's ridiculous. I get into a fight with Paul McCartney, [played by] Jack Black. So it's not like we're going for authenticity. To think that Yoko Ono would even see it makes me want to throw up."

"To think that Yoko Ono would even see it makes me want to throw up."
—Rudd on playing John Lennon in 2008's 'Walk Hard'

After spending all this time with improv actors who also write—like Rogen and Segel—Rudd's now taken up the pen himself, though he's wary to discuss specifics. "So many of the people who work with Judd are writers. We all tend to laugh at the same things. I don't know if it just kind of happens." And then, like a revelation, Rudd figures it out: "We're all nerdy Jewish guys—of course we write." Nerdy Jewish guys who owe it all to Gern Blanston. ■

Paul Rudd's Must List

'Little Britain' (BBC) "It's given me so much pleasure in my life. I watch the DVDs. Love it."



'The Shroud of the Thwacker,' Chris Elliott 2005 "Kind of a takeoff on *The Alienist*, but absolutely absurdist. Completely made-up and wrong, and it basks in it."

Chrysler Building "Jesus, what an amazing building! I love New York."

Kansas City Chiefs "The *NFL Sunday Ticket* moved to DirecTV, [which I don't have]. So I have to go to a bar to watch the Chiefs. I actually do that."

TiVo "I'm a total victim of technology. At a hotel, if we miss something on TV, Jack says, 'Again!' to tell me to rewind like we do at home."

(PREVIOUS PAGE) STYLING: ANNA BINGEMANN/MAGNET L.A.; GROOMING: RHEANNE WHITE/SEE MANAGEMENT; SUIT: HUGO BOSS; SHIRT: VALENTINO; (THIS PAGE) KNOCKED UP: SUZANNE HANOVER; CHRYSLER BUILDING: JOSEPH SOHM/VISIONS OF AMERICA/CORBIS; KANSAS CITY CHIEFS: ROSS DETTMAN/SPORTSCHROME

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Having a Moment

Rie Rasmussen

"I don't take jobs that compromise my integrity," declares Rie Rasmussen, who came to fame as an underwear model in a 2001 Victoria's Secret show. "There are stories I was born to tell." Lately, she's telling them as an actress, director, and writer. Since costarring in Brian De Palma's 2002 thriller *Femme Fatale*, the Denmark native, 29, has become a one-woman creative force: She's penned two short films (one screened at Cannes in 2004) and will publish a book of her drawings and photographs in the fall. And this week, the former international face of Gucci can be seen in *The Fifth Element* director Luc Besson's *Angel-A*, as an eccentric beauty who befriends a con man. —*Karen Leigh*

Mon dieu! *Angel-A* is in French...of which she knew none "I was flipping through [the script] and going, 'Luc, I don't speak French.' He said, 'You do now.' I took a flight to Paris the next morning, and I submerged myself. I had a coach, and I found French friends. We shot the movie in six weeks. Luc made it for nothing, guerrilla-style, camera on the shoulder. We were so free to do what we wanted. It was like theater."

She's drawn to controversial projects *Angel-A* features "a Western woman [Angela] and an Arab man in a love story. These are distinct and different cultures; all we need is a bit of communication and a little bit of love. There's no better message. It's pertinent to today's political situation."

Next up: directing her first full-length feature film Frustrated by countries that defend their borders "with blood," Rasmussen recently moved to Belgrade to direct *Human Zoo*, the drama she wrote about cultural migration. And for this particular adventure, "I'm going to learn Serbian!"

My Worst Audition Ever
by CHANDRA WILSON

My first voice-over audition in New York was for a medical public-service announcement. I said what the card said: "Blah blah blah..." and then the word *ambulance* came, and the guy said, "Cut! Please do that again." And I said, "OK, something, something...am-ba-lance." And he said, "Cut! What are you saying?" I'm from Houston; I didn't know what he was talking about. It came up again this season in [*Grey's Anatomy*'s] ferry-boat-crash episode; I had to say the word three times. I had to learn how to say "am-*bu*-lance." Now I have it! But of course, I didn't get that job.

Bryce Dallas Howard is dying to work with... Ron Howard

"Something that has no sex scenes or kissing." That's how *Spider-Man 3* star (and new mom) Bryce Dallas Howard, 26, imagines her dream project with Dad, director Ron. But she'd want to earn it. "It would be really shameful if I were cast just because I was his daughter. What's most important is that there is no other actress who would be better [for the part]. That may take a while—that may take forever!"

GREY'S ANATOMY: FRANK OCKENFELS; BRYCE DALLAS HOWARD: BILL MCCLELLAND/FILMMAGIC.COM; RON HOWARD: LUIS MARTINEZ/AP

RASMUSSEN PHOTOGRAPH BY JUSTIN STEPHENS

What's on My Mind

JASON ALDEAN

The self-proclaimed hick, 30, loves George Jones *and* GN'R. With his second album, *Relentless*, he sets out to prove that country can draw inspiration from both. BY WHITNEY PASTOREK

DON'T HATE ME BECAUSE I TWANG
People think country music is all sad songs about people's dogs dying and wives leaving. And that's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. Just go pick out an album in the country top 10 right now: Sugarland, Dierks Bentley...something off a Keith Urban album. It's country, but it's got a little edge to it.

SPEAKING OF EDGE...
I think my first album introduced my sound: old-school country. Haggard. Waylon. Southern rock stuff. Then the other influence is Guns N' Roses. I'm hoping all those guys will come back together and do a tour [with] Slash on guitar. Axl with a bunch of other guys just filling up space ain't really a band.

CONFESSION: I LIKE 'N SYNC, TOO!
Justin's a really talented guy. I went to an 'N Sync concert in Nashville, and it was actually cool, just the energy there in the stadium when they played. People were just freaking out. It was pretty neat to watch. [*Laughs*] This is gonna sound like they're a damn influence or something.

MY DAUGHTER ISN'T ALL COUNTRY, EITHER
Keeley was listening to Snoop Dogg and Akon the other day: "I Wanna Love You." Pretty cool to listen to your 4-year-old talk about windin' and grindin' up on the floor. And she walked around singing Tim McGraw's "Last Dollar (Fly Away)" for, like, a month. I hate that song now—no offense, Tim.

HAT'S ALL, FOLKS
I wear a cowboy hat on stage. The guys in my band—I don't tell them what to wear or how to look. You couldn't: They use flatirons [on their hair]. It's ridiculous. I don't give a s--- if they want to go out there with [nothing but] a jock strap and combat boots, so long as they're playing good and putting on a show.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JUSTIN STEPHENS

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SUNDAYS 8PM/7C

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A quirky and thought-provoking comedic new drama series centering on a young magazine photographer, Jenny McIntyre, who suddenly re-evaluates her life and impending nuptials after receiving a wake-up call from the universe. From behind the lens of her camera, Jenny begins to refocus her priorities and her life.

State Of Mind

New Original Series

SUNDAYS 9PM/8C

Starring Lili Taylor and Devon Gummersall

Dr. Ann Bellowes is a brilliant, take-charge therapist whose personal problems rival those of her eccentric patients. But she's not the only one with problems: her offbeat colleagues have to sort through dilemmas of their own. If you don't think shrinks have problems, you're crazy.

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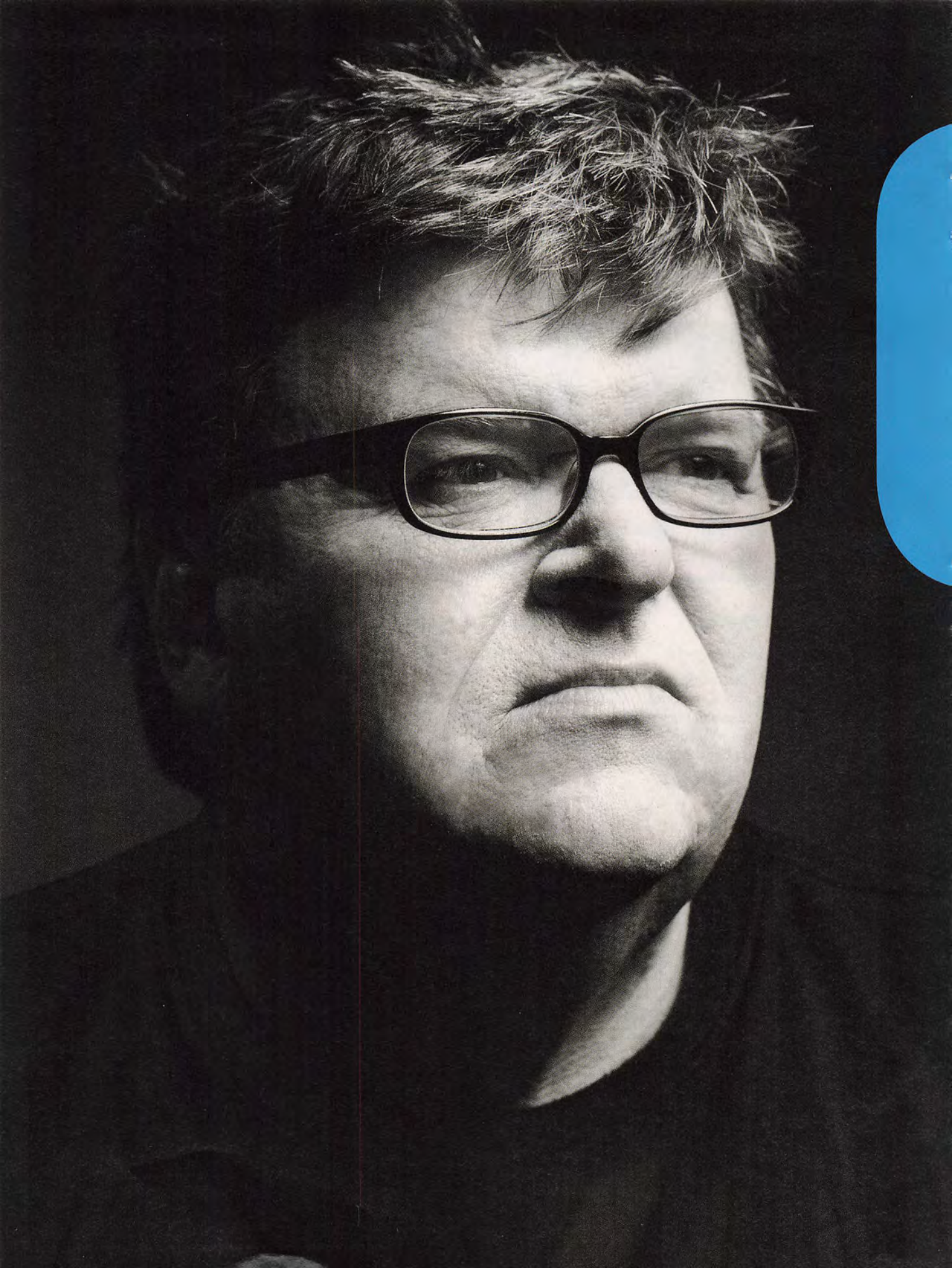

READY FOR MOORE?

HE BASHED BUSH BEFORE IT WAS A PASTIME. NOW HE HITS HEALTH CARE WITH SICKO. LOVE HIM OR HATE HIM, THERE'S ONLY ONE MICHAEL MOORE.

BY DANIEL FIERMAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTIN SCHOELLER

THE LAST TIME MICHAEL MOORE STOOD ON A STAGE AT CANNES, HE HELD THE PALME D'OR IN ONE HAND AND THE SCALP OF A PRESIDENT IN THE OTHER.

But something funny happened when he pulled into town this year. As the 53-year-old director's new movie, *Sicko*, rolled at a gala black-tie screening inside the Palais, a band plugging its own film started setting up equipment for an impromptu set on the red carpet outside. The Flint, Mich., filmmaker received a prolonged standing ovation, but by the time he made it to the sparsely attended post-screening party in his honor, U2 had done what was long thought to be impossible. They had stolen the spotlight from Michael Moore.

Yes, the ritualistic explosion that accompanies the arrival of a Moore documentary will be more subdued this time around. His latest—a scathing look at what's wrong with our health-care system—isn't as incendiary as it is heartbreaking. (For Lisa Schwarzbaum's take on the film, due out June 29, see opposite page.) Moore follows an old couple forced to move into their children's basement after medical bills leave them destitute. A woman who sneaks into Canada because treatment for her cervical cancer isn't covered by her HMO. A carpenter who had a band-saw accident and was given the choice of reattaching a middle finger for 60 grand or a ring finger for $12,000. Moore jets off to Canada, Cuba, France, and England to (more or less) soberly examine nationalized health care. There are jokes, but they're rare—and the big man himself shows up only occasionally, mainly staying behind the camera, narrating in his impish mumble. It's as if all the criticism of Moore—too much hectoring, too much rage, too much of him—seeped in after *Fahrenheit 9/11* and left the filmmaker, well, different. So what happens when Michael Moore calms down and grows up? Exhausted and slightly disheveled from nighttime revelry that stretched until 6 a.m.—even grown-ups need to unwind—one of the more fascinating creatures in our popular culture sat down to chat amid the chaos of the 2007 Cannes film festival.

(PREVIOUS PAGES AND THIS PAGE) STYLING: APRIL JOHNSON; GROOMING: JANE CHOI/ARTWING NY; PROP STYLING: MICHAEL BEDNARK; PRODUCTION: LISA HOOPER

Entertainment Weekly Well, I really hope you enjoyed having health insurance, because you're never getting it again.

Michael Moore [*Laughs*] I'm one of the 9 percent of Americans who are not private employees who still belong to a union. In fact, I belong to three unions—the writers, actors, and screenwriters guilds—and each of them have their own health plan. I'm triply covered!

EW *Fahrenheit 9/11* was one of the most discussed movies in history. It's the highest-grossing documentary of all time. But in retrospect, it seems unclear how much of a difference the movie actually made.

MM I think that in hindsight, it was the beginning of the end for Bush. The end was not going to come a few months later, in the election.

EW But that was clearly the goal.

MM Well, sure. But somebody had to get that ball rolling and I was happy to do that. I think *Fahrenheit* will be judged in the long run as a turning point. Rob Reiner said to me, "This is gonna be one of these moments in American history where a work of art actually impacted things politically." He cited *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which occurred in the 1850s. But the Civil War wasn't won until years

"WHILE IT'S JOURNALISM, IT'S ALSO SATIRE COUPLED WITH A LARGE SPRINKLING OF OPINION TO CREATE A WORK OF ART."

Moore with his director of photography, Rehya Young (left), and producer Meghan O'Hara

later. And it would be another 100 years before we had a civil rights act.

EW You don't appear on screen until 40 minutes into *Sicko*.

MM That's right.

EW That's a real departure. And it seemed like a very conscious decision—one of the biggest criticisms of your work is that you're on the screen way too much.

MM I know. For some reason I'm not very watchable! [*Gestures at his face and laughs*] Well, look, I start with the stories of all these Americans who had to suffer for no good reason and I felt it would be much stronger to not have me in the way.

EW Looking back, do you regret that you put yourself on screen so much in the earlier movies?

MM That's a good question. [*Pause*] No. In *Roger & Me* I was an unknown. But I have to recognize the fact that Michael Moore is not just that guy down the street anymore. As much as I wish I could live my life that way, I have to accept that that isn't how it is. [The Weinstein Co. reportedly paid Moore $25 million for *Sicko*.] And so I try to be very aware now of how my presence affects the situation and the scene. I also think a little bit of me goes a long way.

EW Do you consider yourself a journalist?

MM Are the editorial pages of *The New York Times* journalism? Yes. But they're opinion. They're opinion based on fact. In my case, it's going to take somebody 20 or 30 years to figure out what I came up with, because while it's journalism, it's also satire coupled with a large sprinkling of opinion to create a work of art.

EW You don't go banging on doors in this movie. Did you even *try* to get an interview with the insurance companies?

MM No. I had no intention of doing that, so it was funny to watch the insurance companies make all these preparations for [my health-care film]. All these internal memos and training sessions in the companies for how to handle Michael Moore: "Get him talking about any Detroit sports team or compliment him on how much weight he's lost recently." [*Laughs*] The frightening thing about that is they clearly knew what they were talking about. I was up at 5 a.m. the other night watching the Pistons play the Bulls.

EW Don't you have an obligation to at least give the insurance companies the chance to say no to you? Don't you owe them a call?

MM Absolutely not. They already have their forum. It's called the nightly news. Their story is told over and over again. You *never* hear the other side.

EW There's a moment in *Sicko* where you interview a woman whose husband was denied a bone marrow treatment and died. And there was a

A Critic's Diagnosis

Does 'Sicko' stand up? Our reviewer reports from Cannes.

Yes, there are stunts in *Sicko*. And yes, there's a little showboating, where we see a savvy, internationally famous filmmaker playing the American rube who gawks at foreign culture. But there's a robust clarity of political activism in Moore's latest salvo that marks a new maturity. Something in his bouncy, bulging, commercially entertaining documentary about American health care suggests that the director has sought relief for a previously grievous swelling of the ego.

Sicko scores points presenting real people who have suffered terribly from the treatment limitations imposed by their health insurers, and builds a good, clear, outraged history of the HMO system. Moore, playing "Moore," can't resist insisting how much better everyone's got it everywhere else in the world. Viewers may get a rash as he piles on Guantánamo Bay, the emerging health crises of 9/11 responders, and the saintly treatment offered to a few of those ailing workers by gracious doctors in Cuba. I should be used to rashes as a side effect of Moore movies. But I'd hate for any itch to divert anyone from the importance of the movie's serious diagnosis of a national health-care system in critical condition. **B+**

—Lisa Schwarzbaum

board with easily identifiable people who made that decision. It seems like if this were 5 or 10 years ago, you would be camped outside their houses with a mic.

MM And where did that get us?

EW Well, didn't this whole movie come from one of your old TV shows where you got an HMO to give a guy a new pancreas?

"I THOUGHT, 'THERE'S A BIT OF HYPOCRISY IN MAKING A FILM ABOUT HEALTH CARE AND NOT TAKING THE BEST CARE OF YOURSELF.'"

MM [*Pause*] Right. Yes. And one of the original ideas I had for this movie seven years ago was that I was going to do that 10 times. Ten 10-minute segments. And we could do that and save 10 lives, but then I thought, "That's great—that we save 10 lives—but we need to save 10,000." There are 18,000 people a year dying because they don't have health insurance. I mean, there's much bigger fish to fry here than going after one little board in Kansas City. I guess that would make a good film, but everyone would go, "There goes Mike again." I'm not saying I won't do that again, but at this point in my life it seemed much more dangerous and powerful to do it this way. What I'm suggesting is the elimination of private health insurance, which is a much bigger thing. I don't know any politicians who are going to take that stand, which is too bad. I don't know many liberals who can take that stand. They want to reform the system and put Band-Aids on the system. The system needs to be scrapped and we need to invent something here that will benefit all Americans.

EW Fox News today called *Sicko* evidence of a more grown-up Michael Moore.

MM *The kinder, gentler Mike.* I've heard that in the last couple of days. Well, *Here's Mike and his celebrity smackdown!* [was getting old]. *Who's he taking down today? Today is Charlton Heston. Tomorrow is George Bush.* Yes, the NRA needs to be stopped and Bush absolutely needs to be stopped, but I'm getting older. And you start to realize that you only really see so much time in this world and you hope to see some change in your lifetime. And let's say I was successful with a little hospital in Kansas City, Mo. That's good. But I hope to see a larger change in the not-too-distant future.

EW You took a bunch of 9/11 workers to Guantánamo Bay to try and get them the same health care that al-Qaeda prisoners have been getting. When that didn't work, you went into Havana and placed them in hospitals. I'm assuming that you had to work with the Cuban government on that.

MM Yes. That is correct, in the sense that we had unrestricted access to film as we wanted anywhere

Don't Pack Up for France Just Yet

Want a more balanced look at U.S. health care? We dreamt up six scenes to add to 'Sicko.' —Daniel Gross

The foibles and failings of the U.S. health-care sector can be heartbreaking and frequently tragic. But there's a real upside to the system, which accounts for about 15 percent of the U.S. economy. Some footage Moore's movie really could have used:

SCENE I:
The Cleveland Clinic. Cleveland
Cameras follow a 68-year-old Medicare patient undergoing triple-bypass surgery. The once-risky procedure, now routine, averts heart attacks and extends life expectancy—all at taxpayers' expense. (Ironic panning shot of the McDonald's in the complex's food court.)

SCENE II:
CVS. Topeka, Kan.
Person-on-the-street interviews with middle Americans dashing in and out of neighborhood drugstore picking up generic and branded versions of U.S.-developed pharmaceuticals (Viagra, Prozac, Lipitor) that improve their sex lives, moods, and HDL counts.

SCENE III:
The human-resources department of Pitney Bowes. Stamford, Conn.
CNBC meets *The Office.* Handheld narrative on large company trying to cut medical costs through a program aimed at boosting health of employees. Tour of on-site health clinics, smoking-cessation programs, cafeterias with healthy fare.

SCENE IV:
Headquarters of MicroIslet. San Diego
Tiny biotechnology start-up (one of hundreds in the country), backed by venture capital and public investors, conducts research on transplantation therapy for diabetes patients. If it succeeds, the company could make millions, and free diabetics from the need to inject themselves daily.

SCENE V:
New Jersey Commission on Science & Technology. Trenton, N.J.
It's *The Apprentice*—minus the obnoxious Trumpian overlord and young M.B.A. hotties. Instead, serious research types vie for grants as part of the Garden State's $270 million stem-cell-research initiative. You're hired!

SCENE VI:
Residency program, Massachusetts General Hospital. Boston
Big Brother meets *E.R.* Vérité treatment of the lives, loves, and careers of residents who come from all corners of the globe to work in the Harvard-affiliated hospital's Cancer Center, conducting research and seeing patients. A twofer: highlights the ways in which cancer is evolving from a death sentence into a chronic condition, and the way in which the U.S. health-care system attracts the best and brightest from all over the world to staff our hospitals.

In *Roger & Me*, his 1989 crusade against the auto industry

we wanted with the exception of Guantánamo Bay.

EW Former senator Fred Thompson recently released a YouTube video criticizing you for that trip, making a crack about how Castro has imprisoned and tortured documentary filmmakers before. What do you make of that?

MM [*Sighs*] It makes him look ridiculous, commenting on something he hasn't seen. But what's *really* ridiculous is that he admitted in *The Weekly Standard* to having boxes of Cuban cigars, and with each box he helps to financially support a regime that he's saying is a brutal dictatorship. [Thompson has admitted to nothing, though in his article, *Standard* senior writer Stephen F. Hayes noted boxes of Montecristos in the former lawmaker's office.] I think the American people are smart enough to understand that this is a guy trying to win the Republican primaries and saying, "The way I'm going to appeal to the base is to go after Michael Moore."

EW Do your movies show in Cuba?

MM They are pirated and bootlegged. I never had a chance to talk with Castro about the money that he owes me for showing my movies for free.

EW What do you say to the Canadian and French people who claim you paint a far-too-positive picture of their health-care systems?

MM What I always say is "Wanna switch systems?" And the answer is always no.... We always talk about the negatives: Canadians have to wait two hours or two days or two weeks for this, that, or whatever. Well, okay, let's set up a system where we don't have the Canadian wait. Let's set up a system where we take what they do right and don't do the things that they do wrong.

EW You mentioned that you worried about how much your presence influences what you get. Cuba seems to me to be a great example. There's this incredibly handsome doctor treating the 9/11 workers in the film.

MM Doctor El Dreamy! [*Laughs*] That's what the crew called him.

EW They have all this fancy equipment that they're happy to show off because it's obviously in their best interest to make everything look perfect for you. Don't you worry that you're getting fooled there, or at the very least not showing an accurate representation?

MM But that's the only foot they have to put forward: their best foot. And that's not just Michael Moore saying that. Every study that has been done has shown that the Cuban health care system is perhaps the best in the Third World. We insisted that we be put on a floor that has only Cubans and only Cuban patients. You saw it in the film. They're in a room with four people, it's a tiny room. But the best way to answer this question is to talk to Reggie [an EMT who suffered lung problems after 9/11, who was] in the film. After we left, she had to stay longer for the treatment and she got to thinking the same thing that you're thinking: How much of this is done for the cameras? So because she speaks Spanish, she snuck out of her hospital room one day, and went downstairs to see if the intake [process] was the same. She told them she was a tourist from Puerto Rico who wasn't feeling well. And she said it was the exact same thing.

EW How's your own health?

MM My health is in excellent condition, other than the fact that I need to lose weight. A few months ago I thought, "There's a bit of a personal hypocrisy in making a film about health care and not taking the best care of yourself." I've lost about 25 pounds now. My cholesterol is 142. My sugar number is 90, which is excellent. My blood pressure is 110 over 60.

EW You got a standing ovation here. Is your advice to young filmmakers who want to make it at Cannes to put a 10-minute segment in their films about how wonderful the French are, like you did with *Sicko*?

MM [*Laughs*] Look, the French are just relieved that there was finally one American who was willing to say something nice about them.

EW What's your next big project going to be?

MM The next big project? Well, I made a mistake at Cannes three years ago and told people what it was, which began the insurance companies and drug companies going into DEFCON 4. So I'm not going to talk about what I'm going to do next. It will not be like this film. Or the previous films. And it's best that the subject matter that I'll be addressing not *know* that it's the subject matter.

EW Ooh! It's *Canadian Bacon 2*, isn't it?

MM Yes! How did you know? [*Laughs*] Especially after those Canadian journalists came after me in the press conference yesterday. A bunch of ingrates, those Canadians! ■

The Big Pictures

Ten documentaries that changed things.

1. Triumph of the Will (1935) Scandalous because it's so dazzlingly made, Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi propaganda film revealed the dark side of cinema's power.

2. Let There Be Light (1946) John Huston's movie about World War II veterans helped to put shell shock (and psychotherapy) on the map.

3. Night and Fog (1955) Alain Resnais' disturbing landmark showed the world the Holocaust.

4. Titicut Follies (1967) Frederick Wiseman's film about the treatment of patients at a Mass. mental hospital was banned for decades—a testament to its bitter truth.

5. Gimme Shelter (1970) The death of the '60s, mythologized by the Maysles brothers as a Rolling Stones concert ends in murder.

6. Hearts & Minds (1974) An Oscar-winning Vietnam doc that made the war's contradictions indelible, and caught Gen. Westmoreland speaking his mind.

7. The Thin Blue Line (1988) Errol Morris' true-crime doc ended up exonerating death-row inmate Randall Adams. As a result, he was freed.

8. The Civil War (1990) Ken Burns brought a pivotal era to life. A nation, suddenly hungry for history, tuned in.

9. The War Room (1993) It used James Carville to catch the age of spin, defining the new world of media politics.

10. Fahrenheit 9/11 (2004) Made Moore an icon in the culture wars. *—Owen Gleiberman*

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Jazali

Are You Killing TV?

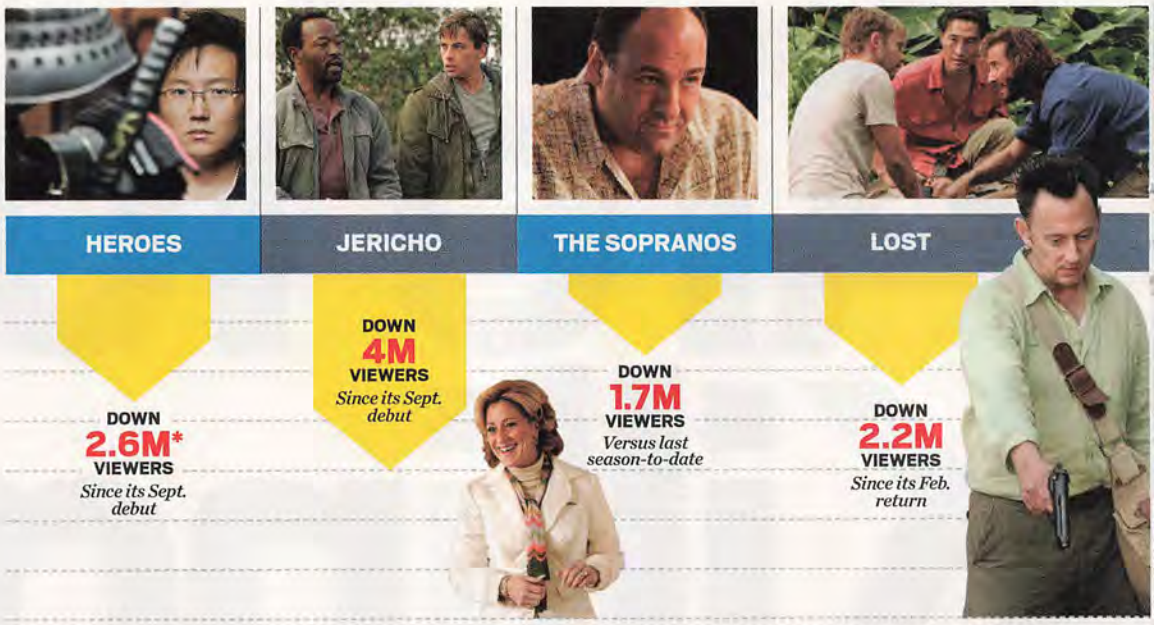
By Jeff Jensen

The way you watch TV is changing—and your favorite shows are hurting. Blame schedule interruptus (digital video recorders and downloading), those annoying hiatuses, and daylight saving time (no, really). Here's what the networks are doing to woo you back.

Illustration by Gary Taxali

TV's Biggest Hits Take a Hit

Few shows were immune to the Vanishing Viewers Virus. The culprits? Hiatus fatigue ('Jericho,' 'Heroes'); slow, season-long declines ('24'); and those pesky—but oh-so-convenient—DVRs ('Lost').



On April 23, few shows were flying higher than NBC's freshman sensation *Heroes*. The superheroes-sans-tights drama was the envy of the industry—super ratings, super reviews, super support from its network, and super potential as a lucrative multimedia brand. As the series prepared to return from a seven-week hiatus that evening, *Heroes* seemed destined to leap to new levels of popularity with a string of much-anticipated season-capping episodes. But the next morning, the producers of *Heroes* woke up to find a big pile of kryptonite on their doorstep. The overnight ratings were in—12 million viewers, down from 14.9 million for its March "spring finale," meaning nearly 20 percent of the show's audience had apparently decided that Hiro Nakamura and the entire power pack weren't as super anymore. "Alarming" is how *Heroes* creator Tim Kring describes the situation. "It was quite difficult for all of us to lose a chunk of the audience. They just literally went away."

The silver lining for Kring and company? They weren't alone. From *Lost* to *24*, *Survivor* to *Desperate Housewives*, viewership on CBS, NBC, Fox, and ABC is down 4 percent over last year. The mystery of the missing eyeballs—worthy of a joint investigation by the crack investigators of *CSI* (down 21 percent versus the 2005–06 season) and *Law & Order* (off 22 percent)—has the whole TV universe peering back through the tube and rapping loudly on the glass: *Hello? Is there anybody out there?* Like some seasonal flu bug, the TV tune-out has bitten hardest this spring, and the timing couldn't be worse: May is the month that networks hawk commercial time on their fall schedules to advertisers. At stake in this annual "upfront" selling season is an estimated $9 billion. "It was very tough on us and bad news for everybody," says NBC Entertainment president Kevin Reilly of the industry's dip. "It was very weird. I don't think anyone quite knows what it was."

No, but everyone has a theory about the Great Springtime Slide of Aught-Seven. First up is—duh—the annual cultural disturbance known as *American Idol*: Not only does it steal attention from other networks, it forces them to disrupt their schedules. "I think *American Idol* is bigger than a television show at this point. It's an institution," says Preston Beckman, Fox's exec VP of programming. "The other guys go to bed every night praying it's going to go down." And there's a technological glitch that should be taken into consideration: According to reports, the devices used by Nielsen to measure TV usage aren't always compatible with newfangled flat-screen TVs. But among the many possible conjectures, the following four seem to best explain why America just isn't watching TV the way it used to.

Must See TV? How About "Musty TV"?

It's a pretty simple, though not always foolproof, formula for success. Great TV = Big Viewership. But the not-so-simple problem this year was that many of the medium's signature shows turned in creatively uneven seasons, including last year's Emmy winners *24* and *The Office*, as well as *Lost*, *Survivor*, and even that seemingly unassailable singing "institution." Certainly *Heroes*, *Ugly Betty*, and *Dancing With the Stars* have inspired some watercooler chatter, but overall, the 2006–07 TV season won't be remembered as the buzziest. "What it comes down to is this: Is it good?" says *Lost* executive producer Damon Lindelof, who believes the industry's current fondness for serialized storytelling leaves it vulnerable to fluctuating ratings. "The minute [serialized shows] are 'not good,' the audience begins to jump ship. There's a

"[Fans] just suddenly have other things they are doing—and they know the DVD is coming."

—*Heroes* exec producer Tim Kring

HEROES: PAUL DRINKWATER. JERICHO: CLIFF LIPSON. SOPRANOS (2): CRAIG BLANKENHORN. LOST (2): MARIO PEREZ.

*Measured in millions

very, very small margin for error for the haters to begin hating. When you live in the zeitgeist, you have to prepare yourself to be out of the zeitgeist."

The Fluke Factor

Believe it or not, many TV execs honestly think that either you were too tired to watch TV, or you found something better to do, or both. Here's the rationale: Daylight saving time began on March 11—three weeks earlier than it did in 2006. The impact during that window was statistically small (overall TV usage was down 5 percent over the same period in 2006), but there may have been cumulative effects, as people started leaving the house to enjoy the longer days three weeks earlier than usual. "Daylight saving time got people out of the habit of watching TV earlier," says Beckman. Another anomalous blip: Last year, NBC aired the Winter Olympics in February, while the other networks held their original episodes for later in the season rather than compete with real-life blades of glory. This year, however, viewers got an icy blast of repeats in March and April. Explains David Poltrack, CBS' chief research officer, "That's the biggest factor—the heavy repeat factor—for the ratings decline."

Hiatuses Hurt

Out of sight, out of mind—and out of your TiVo queue. This is especially true if a show is soggy with serial story lines. In an effort to cut down on momentum-killing repeats, the networks gave *Lost*, *Heroes*, and *Jericho* extended breathers during the season—but the strategy backfired. All the shows took some Nielsen lumps (see chart, above), but *Jericho* ultimately suffered the biggest blow: After losing 1.9 million viewers when it returned from an 12-week hiatus in February, the post-Armageddon drama never recovered and was recently nuked by CBS. Why don't the networks simply make more episodes so repeats aren't an issue? Two reasons: money and time. The average season is 36 weeks long, while the average drama makes 22 episodes—and production limitations mean larger episode orders are almost impossible. (Hey, even actors need vacations sometimes.)

Fortunately for *Heroes*, the series has a concept that's flexible enough to create new, repeat-killing opportunities. Next season, NBC will fill the show's hiatus with *Heroes: Origins*, a placeholder that's part miniseries, part spin-off (see sidebar, page 38). Kring—who will lead a completely separate creative team to produce *Origins*—says "the whole impetus" for the new series was *Heroes*' post-hiatus slide. "This type of show has an addictive quality to it, and when you break that addiction, you have interrupted part of the reason of its success," says Kring. "[Fans] just suddenly have other things they are doing—and they know the DVD is coming." Which brings us to the big twist in this tricky story...

You Actually ARE Watching TV—Just Later

The industry wonks call it "time-shifting"—using digital video recorders (now in 17 percent of homes) to watch shows outside of their scheduled time periods. It's a growing phenomenon that also extends to streaming video online, downloading, and DVDs. Revenue from video downloading is expected to nearly triple this year, while Netflix says that approximately 20 percent of the product it ships is TV on DVD. "Consumers value the ability to manage their time more than ever," says Ted Sarandos, chief content officer of Netflix. DVDs and DVRs allow fans to "enjoy a show at their own pace."

DVDs, DVRs, webstreaming, and downloading shows from iTunes let viewers "enjoy a show at their own pace."

—Netflix chief content officer Ted Sarandos

THE SHIELD: PRASHANT GUPTA; DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES (2): RON TOM; CSI (2): ROBERT VOETS; 24: KELSEY MCNEAL; THE OFFICE: JUSTIN LUBIN; IPOD: JOHANSEN KRAUSE

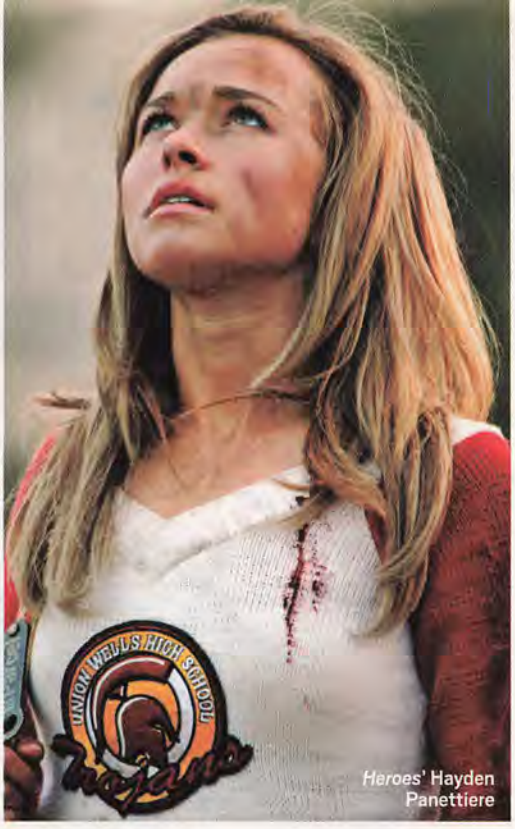
Four Things You Need to Know About 'Heroes: Origins'

IT'S A NEW-CENTURY 'TWILIGHT ZONE'
Creator Tim Kring cites Rod Serling's anthology series as the model for *Origins*. Each episode—"cautionary tales about fantastic characters"—will focus on the origin story of one or two heroes.

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY
Origins won't be dependent on *Heroes*' mythology. Familiar faces may cameo, and the show could explore fringe characters like Claude the Invisible Man (Christopher Eccleston). Viewers will also get to vote a character onto the flagship show. "We like to think of it as the farm team for *Heroes*," says Kring.

THE PREMIERE WILL EMPHASIZE FUN
Think Hiro Nakamura, *Heroes*' gleeful "Powers are fun!" Everyman. Says Kring: "The first episode won't be a particularly dour version of the show." FYI: *Origins* will start production this fall but probably won't launch until next spring.

CELEBRITY CREATORS ARE WELCOME
Kring is hoping *Heroes*' Hollywood fans—writers, directors, and actors—"might be interested in coming to play with us for 10 days or so." Our wish list: Charlie Kaufman, Spike Jonze, and Jack Black. —*JJ*



Heroes' Hayden Panettiere

Indeed, when you factor in a show's delayed-viewing numbers, the whole story of perceived viewership slippage changes. The "alarming" situation surrounding *Heroes* becomes slightly less alarming when you learn that an average of 1.7 million watch it later. And *Lost*, consistently one of TV's most time-shifted series, sees its audience swell by over 2 million once you include viewers who watch it on DVR within seven days of the original airing. "We view *Lost* as being one of the first shows that is transcending the traditional television-watching model," says executive producer Carlton Cuse. "The only way to really [assess] the true audience for *Lost* is to aggregate all those numbers together."

And therein lies the rub. The lifeblood of the TV biz is still advertising dollars, and until recently, networks have been unable to get sponsors to pay for DVR time-shifting. Little wonder—the chief selling point of DVRs has been their ability to zip through commercials. But the TV suits may finally be winning out: Madison Avenue execs now appear to be willing to accept "live plus three" ratings, meaning viewers who watch shows live or up to three days after they air. "There are some people who aren't as determined to [skip] every commercial," says Shari Anne Brill, a VP at media buying firm Carat USA. "So [live plus three] is a better measure of who is more likely to see your ads."

In an effort to stay on top of the trends, Nielsen Media Research—which began factoring time-shifting into its number-crunching in December 2005—will soon begin releasing stats on commercial viewership, too. "It's been complicated to get the industry to agree to it, because everyone had different desires," says Nielsen spokesperson Gary Holmes of the commercial ratings system. "[But] it allows networks to get credit for DVR playback and allows the advertisers to pay only for the ads that are seen."

Now comes the network's slightly harder task: convincing the media (hiya, folks!) to refrain from their usual quick-take analysis of a program's vitality based on next-morning ratings data. If a show gets prematurely tagged as a sinking ship, it could affect lucrative ancillary products like DVDs, videogames, and webisodes. For example, about a third of all *Lost* DVD purchases come from newbies who never saw the episodes when they first aired, according to studio data. And if we're really being honest, bad buzz hurts: Nobody wants to be at the watercooler talking to himself. "If the story is 'Ratings are down,' that perception hurts the show," says Lindelof. "If you suddenly feel you're the only one who's still watching, that's going to affect [your desire to stick with] the show."

All things considered, networks would rather you tune in the night an episode first airs. Underscoring that simple fact are the various adjustments each network will make next season to keep viewers from drifting or waiting too long to watch shows on their DVR. Serialized dramas remain hot, but more and more of them—like CBS' midseason wife-swapping drama *Swingtown*—will adopt the *24*/*Lost* model of airing repeat-free runs. They'll also be slightly *less* serialized. "We're going to be looking at giving people the best way to get hooked," says Kelly Kahl, scheduling chief for CBS and The CW. "Most of the talks we're having with producers are about providing a *Sopranos* experience—in each episode, there will be a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end."

Among returning shows, the mantra is maintenance—via aggressive online and offline promotion. Prior to *Lost*'s return in early 2008, Verizon customers will finally get a long-promised series of two- to four-minute "mobisodes" featuring an array of castaways, including Matthew Fox's Jack. Even advertisers will be working harder to snare your attention. This fall, DreamWorks plans on producing a series of 20 "minisodes" for NBC starring Jerry Seinfeld to promote his animated flick *Bee Movie*. "It's a galvanizing time," says Mike Pilot, NBC's head of ad sales. "It puts the advertiser, the creator, and the broadcaster all on the same page for the first time ever." As for *Heroes*' Kring, he's simply trying to get his head around a strain of mutation that *doesn't* involve his superpowered characters: "I think what happened this spring just speaks to the way people are looking at TV. Things are changing. They're really changing." Looks like Hiro and company aren't the only ones evolving. ■
(Additional reporting by Jennifer Armstrong, Lynette Rice, Dan Snierson, and Tanner Stransky)

HEROES: DEAN HENDLER

TV Winners and Losers

After a blockbuster fall (in which viewership rose 4 percent), many prime-time series took a dive that can't be blamed solely on the power of Fox's American Idol. *Still, some networks fared better than others. Here, who scored despite the dip—and who buckled under the pressure.* —Jennifer Armstrong

CBS

Season average: 12.5 million weekly viewers

WHAT WORKED

Crime procedurals still pay: *Criminal Minds* (14.2 million viewers, up 1.6 million) stared down even *Idol*. And the Eye gained 30 percent on Sunday with the bold pairing of *Cold Case* (14.4 million) and *Without a Trace* (14.7 million). "It's good flow," says scheduling chief Kelly Kahl. Though not good enough to keep: *Trace* returns to Thursdays next fall.

WHAT DIDN'T

ABC's Thursday lineup hampered CBS standbys *Survivor* (15.3 million) and *CSI* (20.5 million), causing a 19 percent decline (though CBS still won in total viewers). And CBS' attempts at getting younger (*The Class*, 8.4 million) and buzzier (*Jericho*, 9.5 million) failed. The latter, Kahl says, simply "never built momentum."

FOX

Season average: 10.3 million weekly viewers

WHAT WORKED

Well, there's this *American Idol* show (30.4 million), which also happened to help launch the breakout game show of the season, *Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?* (12.7 million), finally giving Fox a fighting chance on Thursdays. Says programming VP Preston Beckman, "That's the big shocker for us."

WHAT DIDN'T

Fox's fall curse continues: RIP *Happy Hour* (3.9 million), *Standoff* (6.1 million), *Vanished* (5.5. million), *Justice* (5.6 million)... So what's the plan to save *this* September? More reality, and fewer baseball pre-emptions (14, down from 26)! "We're much cleaner," Beckman says, "and that's going to help us strategize differently."

abc

Season average: 9.9 million weekly viewers

WHAT WORKED

Dancing With the Stars (19.2 million) waltzed to the top, bested only by *Idol* and *CSI*. The net scored with estro-friendly pairings like *Grey's Anatomy* (19.5 million) and *Ugly Betty* (11.3 million) on Thursdays and *Desperate Housewives* (17.5 million) and *Brothers & Sisters* (11 million) on Sundays—a strategy echoed in fall's girly-drama-heavy lineup.

WHAT DIDN'T

Old-guard comedies like *According to Jim* (6.3 million) faltered, while new ones like *The Knights of Prosperity* (5 million) fared even worse. And the later hours were not kind to complicated new dramas *The Nine* (8.1 million) and *Six Degrees* (8.3 million). "We just weren't as strong at 10 p.m.," says ABC chief of research Larry Hyams.

NBC

Season average: 8.9 million weekly viewers

WHAT WORKED

In one all-too-appropriate word, *Heroes* (14.4 million). The show's superpowers included materializing viewers from thin air (NBC's down 9 percent overall but up on Mondays) and luring evasive young male viewers. The only other uptick came courtesy of another group of power players: *Sunday Night Football* (16.5 million).

WHAT DIDN'T

NBC's fictionalized football didn't do as well, but, thankfully, *Friday Night Lights* (6.1 million) will live to play again next season. Alas, *Studio 60* (8.5 million) and *Kidnapped* (5.6 million) joined the serialized scrap heap. "Once you don't get viewers for those shows," laments NBC scheduling president Vince Manze, "they're never coming."

THE CW

Season average: 3.2 million weekly viewers

WHAT WORKED

Network suits were psyched just to get the WB-UPN mash-up off the ground. "It's more difficult than people think," says Kahl, who also oversees The CW's schedule. But the network change didn't faze crown jewels *America's Next Top Model* (5.4 million) or *Beauty and the Geek* (4 million). Both shows will be key anchors next season.

WHAT DIDN'T

Several previous ratings and critical darlings showed their age, from *7th Heaven* (3.3 million) to *Gilmore Girls* (3.7 million) to the now-canceled *Veronica Mars* (2.5 million). "*Veronica* and *Gilmore* were [supposed to be] the emblematic pairing," Kahl says. "It was frustrating that we couldn't make it into something bigger."

CBS LOGO: CBS; *CRIMINAL MINDS* (MANDY PATINKIN), *THE CLASS*: CLIFF LIPSON; *CRIMINAL MINDS* (SHEMAR MOORE): MONTY BRINTON. FOX LOGO: FOX. *HOUSE*: MICHAEL YARISH; *STANDOFF*: ISABELLA VOSMIKOVA. ABC LOGO: © 2007 AMERICAN BROADCASTING COM; *GREY'S ANATOMY* (PATRICK DEMPSEY): BOB D'AMICO; *GREY'S ANATOMY* (ELLEN POMPEO): CRAIG SJODIN; *THE KNIGHTS OF PROSPERITY*: PATRICK HARBRON; NBC LOGO: NBC; *HEROES*: PAUL DRINKWATER; *STUDIO 60* (MATTHEW PERRY): MITCH HAASETH; *STUDIO 60* (SARAH PAULSON): CHRIS HASTON; THE CW LOGO: THE CW; *VERONICA MARS*: PATRICK ECCLESINE

surprisingly easy.

LUCK BE A LADY

Playing the only girl in the slick boys' club 'Ocean's Thirteen' was Ellen Barkin shows EW her cards. But not all of them.

By Chris Nashawaty

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ONDREA BARBE

If you've watched Ellen Barkin slam Al Pacino up against a wall and devour him in *Sea of Love*, or snarl threats backed by hot lead in *Wild Bill*, or strut like a ladies' man trapped in a woman's body in *Switch*, then there are certain assumptions you might make about her. That she swears like a sailor, for instance. That she never cries. And that she's probably most comfortable sitting around a poker table with a bunch of guys drinking Scotch. • "Ewwww, I've never drunk Scotch in my life! I'm a champagne and red wine kind of gal," says Barkin, right before explaining how easy it is, in fact, to make her cry. • This is why Ellen Barkin is an actress. And a damn good one. • When Barkin's first film, *Diner*, came out in 1982, the notoriously tough critic Pauline Kael likened her, with her "tough wistfulness," to a female Brando. Granted, reviewers haven't always been as kind. But that may have more to do with the fact that Hollywood's never been quite sure what to do with a woman who was so brass-tough and so beautiful at the same

Barkin with a disguised Damon in *Ocean's*; (below, top to bottom) with Pacino in *Sea of Love*, Jimmy Smits in *Switch*, and Daniel Stern in *Diner*

"I like my looks, but they're certainly an acquired taste," Barkin says. "Hollywood loves a girl who looks like men could make her cry. And I'm clearly not that."

time. Barkin, who was born in the Bronx, always seemed like she knew too much to be innocent, talked too straight to be polished, and liked sex too much to be sweet. Gwyneth Paltrow she wasn't.

But now, at 53, Barkin's finally gotten Hollywood's attention again. Next week, she'll join Brad Pitt, George Clooney, and the rest of their band of merry con men in *Ocean's Thirteen*. It goes without saying, she fit right in on the set. "She loved being the only woman with all these guys," says *Ocean's* producer Jerry Weintraub, who gave Barkin her big break in *Diner* 25 years ago. "She hung out with us, she drank with us, and she partied with us. She's different from all the other actresses around. She's *all* woman."

In person, that definitely seems to be the case. Barkin is a ridiculously thin 5 foot 7. Her hair is cut in a sandy blond bob that grazes her chin. And she's dressed in a bolero-length black leather jacket, black jeans so tight they look like they took a team of workmen to shoehorn on, and a pair of towering, fire-engine-red stiletto heels. What's most surprising about Barkin, though, is her voice. She speaks softly, daintily—like a woman who knows a secret and isn't about to share it with just anyone. Although her crooked, bitter-lemon smile signals when you're getting close.

For instance, when asked what it was like to pal around with Clooney and Pitt—if they had to scale back their boys-will-be-boys-ness in her presence—Barkin cracks up. "No, I'm not that kind of girl. To do these *Ocean's* movies, there has to be a little bit of a no-fuss, no-muss attitude to you. You have to be able to take a joke. I almost felt obliged to get my clothes as tight as they could possibly be and do the girl job."

In *Ocean's Thirteen*, Barkin does the girl job with gusto. Her character, Abigail Sponder, is the cleavage-spilling gal Friday to an evil casino magnate played by Al Pacino. Clooney and Co. plot to take Pacino down—a scheme that has Matt Damon seducing Barkin. If these two seem to have an easy familiarity, that's because they shared a scene in *Ocean's Twelve*—a scene that wound up on the cutting-room floor. Another notable reunion in *Ocean's Thirteen* is Barkin and Pacino, who costarred in 1989's steamy *Sea of Love*. "Al Pacino was my favorite acting partner ever," she says. "That movie really made me a movie star." Although, Barkin is the first to admit, an unconventional one. "I like my looks, but they're certainly an acquired taste," she says. "I'm not a frothy, girly girl. I was never a pretty little starlet. Hollywood loves a girl who looks like men could make her cry. And I'm clearly not that. I'm a New York Jew from a working-class family. That's how tough I am."

When she finishes saying this, the tough New York Jew kicks up her heels, lies down on a black leather sofa, and starts explaining how being a woman on the shady side of 50 in Hollywood isn't always easy on the ego. It's never a happy day, for example, when you graduate from playing the bombshell to playing the mom (despite the fact that she has a 17-year-old and a 14-year-old in real life from her first marriage, to actor Gabriel Byrne). Unlike some of her peers, though, Barkin says she's never had plastic surgery and never will. "I don't have a political problem with it, I just don't want to look crazy! Would I rather look the way I looked when I was 43? Yes. 33? No. I always thought women peaked between 36 and 43. Something happens to your face and everything just settles in. I look at that gorgeous little Scarlett Johansson and I think, 'Oh, my God, what is that girl going to look like when she's a woman?!"

All of which inevitably leads Barkin to the subject of her love life...or *alleged* love life. "This past year, according to Page Six, I had the most exhausting sex life," she says. In truth, Barkin is single. And she probably will be for a while, considering how badly her last relationship—a five-year marriage to billionaire cosmetics mogul Ronald Perelman—ended. When they split last year, it wasn't pretty. The tabloids claimed that he had her escorted from their Manhattan town house and that, later, she threw a drink in his face. Those same gossips also painted Barkin as a sort of feminist role model when she auctioned off the millions in jewelry her ex had given her.

Not that she sees it that way. "Here's this woman who you think is really tough and isn't going to take s---," she says, "but I'm just a person. I make mistakes. I was married twice. I was in love with both men. And both marriages ended. So this thing with the jewelry sale...look, if you were married to someone, would you keep your wedding pictures in your house after you got divorced? It wasn't a stand. I wasn't saying, 'F--- you!' It just seemed to be what any normal person would do."

Barkin lets loose a heavy sigh.

"It would be nice to be considered a role model. But I wish I felt like that because I've...taken...so...much...s---."

Barkin shrugs and smiles her cockeyed smile. And in that smile there seems to be a promise. The promise she's been making on screen for the past 25 years. The promise that says, This too shall pass. Because Ellen Barkin doesn't take s--- from anyone for very long. ■

(PAGES 40–41) STYLING: ANDREA MENKE/RAY BROWN. HAIR: SEBASTIAN/JED ROOT. MAKEUP: KYRA PANCHENKO/THE MILTON AGENCY. COAT: LANVIN/ALBRIGHT, INC. SHOES: CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN/ALBRIGHT, INC. CORSET BRA: KIKI DE MONTPARNASSE/KIKOM.COM. (THIS PAGE) *OCEAN'S THIRTEEN*: MELINDA SUE GORDON. *SEA OF LOVE*: UNIVERSAL/KOBAL COLLECTION. *SWITCH*: WARNER BROS./COURTESY EVERETT COLLECTION. *DINER*: EVERETT COLLECTION

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THE READERS STRIKE BACK

You can't please everyone. That's what you've gotta keep in mind when compiling a list like our recent Sci-Fi 25, a rundown of the best science fiction TV and film of the last 25 years. For every person who was thrilled to find favorites like *The Matrix*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Lost*, and *Blade Runner* on the roster, there were two more upset that their particular favorite was overlooked. Even though editing a magazine isn't a democracy (we like to think of it as a benevolent dictatorship), when the people speak this loudly—over 1,200 comments, via e-mail and postings on EW.com—it's time to let them air their grievances and respond in a thoughtful manner. So, here, in most-requested order, are the Top 10 Things We Left Off...And Why. —*Marc Bernardin*

STARGATE SG-1: © SCI FI CHANNEL/EVERETT COLLECTION (2)

1 Stargate

YOU SAY "*Stargate* was the first movie I ever went to where the whole audience stood on their feet and applauded when it was over. And *Stargate SG-1*'s longevity (10 years and counting!) would seem to validate its place in science fiction history." —*Richard Duntz*

WE SAY While the sheer act of not being canceled is laudable these days, longevity doesn't necessarily imply quality—*Yes, Dear* was on CBS for, like, 43 years. The movie was diverting, but the fact that every new alien culture on the TV series speaks English invalidates it, MacGyver notwithstanding.

COMPILED BY GAVIN SHULMAN

2 Farscape

YOU SAY "I'm 'frelling' disappointed that you did not include *Farscape*, arguably the best sci-fi series ever, on your list! Like *Firefly*, it also had an army of passionate Internet-based supporters who were ultimately successful at persuading the network to bring the series back." —*Steven Guy*

WE SAY We never watched much of *Farscape*. Sue us. After the first few episodes, that damned puppet got on our nerves. Besides, puppets simply don't belong in adult science fiction...unless that's Frank Oz's hand up there.

3 Babylon 5

YOU SAY "I was quite disappointed to see that *Babylon 5* was nowhere to be seen. *B5* was intelligent, well-written, and well-acted, and it managed to do what no other show, sci-fi or otherwise, managed to do—tell a continuous ongoing story over a planned five-year arc." —*Joseph Madden*

WE SAY While we have a lot of respect for what *B5* creator J. Michael Straczynski pulled off, the series' chief virtue is what turned us off: The ongoing arc made it too insular. That said, it probably deserved a place on the list anyway. Our bad.

4 The Fifth Element

YOU SAY "*The Fifth Element* is pop sci-fi done right. A roguish antihero, a sexy femme fatale who is the key to saving the world, and a great over-the-top villain played to perfection by Gary Oldman. Add some fast action and creative visuals, you have one damn fine sci-fi film." —*Andrew*

WE SAY This is a film whose sole purpose seems to be showing off whatever new plasma-Dolby A/V tech you've got in your living room. But in the end, it's a lot of sound and fury signifying nothing. A being of pure love is needed to save the universe? Come *on*.

5 Buffy the Vampire Slayer

YOU SAY "How in the bloody hell could you have not listed *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and/or *Angel* in the top five? This was a grave oversight! *Buffy* was not only one of the best sci-fi shows, but also one of the best-written, -acted, and -directed shows of all time!" —*Suzette Zaginailoff*

WE SAY How could we leave this, creator Joss Whedon's crowning pop culture achievement, off the list? Easy: because its not science fiction. Buffy slays vampires. It's right there in the title. And these aren't bloodsuckers created by some loophole-inducing scientific experiment or plasma-borne virus. *Buffy* is a work of gothic fantasy, replete with demons and witches and mummies and werewolves and magically hot lesbians.

6 Gattaca

YOU SAY "*Gattaca* is an intelligent commentary on the struggle between Orwellian state control of a person's role in society based on genetics and the individual's choice in what they do with their life." —*Zeek*

WE SAY There are some big thoughts going on in Andrew Niccol's directorial debut. Ethan Hawke and Jude Law are both pretty terrific in it. We actually like this film. If we were doing the top 26 films of the past 26 years, it might've made the cut. But as it is, we felt we couldn't cut anything on the list to make room.

7 Dark City

YOU SAY "*The Matrix* is No. 1 and you don't even include *Dark City*—a far better execution of the concept of reality and perception, as well as a far more visually appealing film?" —*Brad Niesmertelny*

WE SAY *Dark City* is a beautiful film—one that's gone on to inspire its own fair share of stylistic imitators—but it never engaged us on the visceral-mythic level that *The Matrix* did. And, despite our love for Jennifer Connelly, Carrie-Anne Moss' swaggering latex cool had us at hello.

8 Dune

YOU SAY "Made in 1984 starring Kyle MacLachlan, Patrick Stewart, Sting, Dean Stockwell, José Ferrer, Max von Sydow, and Sean Young. Great plot, great cast, great director, David Lynch." —*Sid*

WE SAY Frank Herbert's 1965 novel is a masterpiece of the genre. But Lynch's adaptation is a fascinating misfire. While it has elements to admire—particularly on the design front—it's too much of a mess to make the list. And the Sci Fi Channel's miniseries simply didn't capture Herbert's exotic weirdness.

9 Independence Day

YOU SAY "I mean, come on. *Total Recall*, *Starship Troopers*, and *Brazil* (who has ever heard of *Brazil*?) make the list and *Independence Day* doesn't?! I love *Galaxy Quest*, but are you really going to put it on the list before *Independence Day*?" —*Mitch*

WE SAY Aside from the complete ridiculousness of your *Brazil* statement, Mitch, the fact of the matter is, any film where the heroes defeat the villains by downloading a computer virus from a PowerMac to an alien network loses any and all science fiction credibility.

10 12 Monkeys

YOU SAY "Still one of Gilliam's best, and perhaps still one of Brad Pitt's finest performances."—*Joel Stevens*

WE SAY He's right, this is one of director Terry Gilliam's best films. But, unlike James Cameron or Paul Verhoeven, we didn't feel Gilliam needed two films on the same list, and we believe *Brazil* is the most representative of his visionary powers. *12 Monkeys* was another film that would've made the cut if the list were longer. Yet, if forced to choose between *Brazil*, *12 Monkeys*, and *Time Bandits*, we'll choose *Brazil* every time.

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THE MUST LIST

Ten Things We Love This Week

1

DEBRA MESSING in 'The Starter Wife'

USA's new dramedy brings the *Will & Grace* alum back to the small screen—and her vivacious performance as a spurned L.A. wife makes us remember how much we've missed her.

2. ONCE

Irish rocker Glen Hansard (the Frames) is both winsome leading man and spot-on soundtrack artist in this impressively naturalistic movie musical.

3. FALLING MAN, by Don DeLillo

In one of his most moving novels, the postmodern master imagines Sept. 11's long-term psychological effects on an extended family of Manhattanites.

4. Interpol's new single, "THE HEINRICH MANEUVER"

Who's Heinrich? No idea. Whatever that punny title means, we're sure of one thing: The NYC rockers' latest moody groove is another winner.

5. THE PRINCESS SQUAD in 'Shrek 3'

Fiona's posse of storybook heroines—voiced by comics including Amy Sedaris—are the animated sequel's most badass characters by far.

6. THE ULTIMATE FIGHTER 5

The Spike TV reality series' latest season boasts a truly off-the-wall cast of housemates/fearsome martial artists.

7. KEREN ANN, Keren Ann

On her fifth solo album, the velvet-voiced French-Israeli chanteuse (who sings in English) shares meditative musings on the nature of heartbreak.

8. DEREK & SIMON: THE SHOW

Mr. Show's Bob Odenkirk directs these uproarious Internet shorts (on *superdeluxe.com*), which skewer the rituals of the dating game with subversive wit.

9. PRINCE OF THE CITY

Treat Williams and Jerry Orbach headline a sprawling cast in director Sidney Lumet's tangled story of corruption among narcotics detectives, finally out on DVD more than 25 years after its theatrical release.

10

THE THIRD MAN: TWO-DISC EDITION

The classic 1949 thriller, starring Orson Welles as a morally ambiguous entrepreneur, is reissued with a slew of entertaining extras.

THE STARTER WIFE: PAUL A. BROBEN; SHREK 3: DREAMWORKS ANIMATION SKG; THE ULTIMATE FIGHTER 5: KEVIN LYNCH; KEREN ANN: JEAN BAPTISTE LACROIX/WIREIMAGE.COM; THE THIRD MAN: MPTV.NET

THE REVIEWS

'BUG' + 'LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA' ON DVD + THE CW'S 'HIDDEN PALMS' + R. KELLY 'DOUBLE UP' + PETER TEMPLE 'THE BROKEN SHORE'

Depp and Bloom walk the walk

MOVIES

Thar She Blows

The ballad of Captain Jack comes to a close with this breathless, busy final chapter.

BY OWEN GLEIBERMAN

Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End
Johnny Depp, Keira Knightley, Orlando Bloom
PG-13, 167 mins.
(Walt Disney)

In *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End*, Jack Sparrow (Johnny Depp), voyaging back from the Land of the Dead, or Davy Jones' Gym Sock, or whatever the hell the place is called, studies a puzzle map with interlocking circles, which he spins around until they spell a hidden message: "Up Is Down." From that one coded signal, Jack realizes that he must plunge the ship he's sailing into the sea and come out the other side. That's a nifty trick. And, in general, Up Is Down seems a good motto for a *Pirates* sequel, which needs every last bit of topsy-turvy spirit.

That spirit is there, early on, in a kiddie head-trip sequence where Jack, still stuck in his undead limbo, hallucinates multiple versions of himself, which he happily kills off. He then thinks

that he's seeing—or maybe *is* seeing—rocks that turn into crabs, which carry his ship across the desert. (Hey, I don't write this stuff, I just review it.) A bit later, the movie features an elaborately well-staged Mexican standoff, which ends with a monkey holding a gun. And there is also a meeting of the world's pirate lords (they've gathered to fight back against the British), which suggests a Hell's Angels convention with yellower teeth. When Keith Richards, as Jack's matey of a father, finally shows up, for roughly two minutes, brandishing a face that's like melted Silly Putty, he makes Davy Jones, with his squishy tentacled mug, look like a Neutrogena spokesmodel.

Yet along with all of this sprightly nonsense, there is far too much lugubrious nonsense. *At World's End* is so frantic and dissociated that it barely pretends to make sense. The *Pirates* films, with their merry storm-tossed slapstick, their retro serial corniness, are a bit like the Indiana Jones films, only broader, sloppier, and longer. They make you feel like you're at a Disney theme restaurant with too many enthusiastic waiters. That quality, fun yet exhausting, is exacerbated by the tendency of third-part sequels to feature more conflicts and problems than the previous two installments combined.

It must be that the director, Gore Verbinski, and the screenwriters, Ted Elliott and Terry Rossio, are overcompensating. Just about every character in *At World's End* comes with his or her own agenda, and the movie grows top-heavy as we attempt to keep track of who's trying to accomplish what. Will Turner (Orlando Bloom) is out to free his barnacled father (Stellan Skarsgård); Elizabeth Swann (Keira Knightley) wants to avenge the death of *her* father (Jonathan Pryce); Tia Dalma (Naomie Harris), with her mondo-zombie accent ("Dare's an eevil undah da sea..."), wants to free the ocean goddess inside her; the heartless squid-face Davy Jones (Bill Nighy) wants, for a moment at least, to rediscover his soft side; the happy raider Barbossa (Geoffrey Rush) wants to reassert the freewheeling age of pirates; and good old Jack just wants to booze and sail. After *At World's End*, you'll know how he feels. The movie is two hours and 47 minutes of debts, curses, shape-shifts, and betrayals, most of which leave us baffled because they don't pay off.

The worst news, to me (and maybe I'm in the minority), is that the film returns to the heavy-spirited whimsy of *The Curse of the Black Pearl*. The follow-up, *Dead Man's Chest*, was an anomaly of a sequel, in that the entire film took its tone from Johnny Depp's arch, sozzled deviltry. It was a true tall tale, with cheeky duels out of a '30s Paramount comedy, that terrific sea monster, and that demented chase on the giant wheel (which was like Buster Keaton restaged by Spielberg). It had a tossed-in-the-air fruitcake quality that

Knightley and Chow Yun-Fat share wardrobe tips

worked for audiences like an escape from the escapism of summer movies. *At World's End* lacks that fizzy charm. It's dutiful rather than buoyant.

Depp still clowns like a pickled vamp, using his here-slurry, there-speeded-up delivery to suggest that Jack is a lot smarter than he lets on (or even realizes himself). Yet he holds no more surprise for us. If there's an actor who provides *At World's End* with a shot of humanity, it's Bill Nighy. He uses his fiery theatrical rhythms to give Davy Jones a wonderful seething fervor, and I wish the film had played up his poison-love backstory. Instead, we're stuck with a late-in-the-game revival of the Orlando Bloom–Keira Knightley "chemistry," and it's an embarrassment, an admission that this old-fashioned yarn needs romance yet, in effect, has none. Knightley's Elizabeth becomes a pirate captain this time. You know a franchise has run its course when it has a buccaneer heroine who looks as if she'd hate to get her face smudged. **C**

Backstory

+ Disney wanted to release *Pirates 2* and *3* in the summer and winter of last year, but director Gore Verbinski (above) argued against it: "You need to get Johnny's face off the Froot Loops box for a couple of months. There would have been no chance to develop an appetite."

CRITICAL MASS

A sampling of critics from across the country grade 10 current releases.

	TY BURR *Boston Globe*	LISA KENNEDY *The Denver Post*	LIAM LACEY *Toronto Globe and Mail*	MICK LASALLE *San Francisco Chronicle*	JACK MATHEWS *N.Y. Daily News*	TODD McCARTHY *Variety*	CLAUDIA PUIG *USA Today*	CARRIE RICKEY *The Philadelphia Inquirer*	RENE RODRIGUEZ *The Miami Herald*	STEPHANIE ZACHAREK *Salon.com*	ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY	EW READERS*	CRITICS' AVERAGE
DISTURBIA	C+	B	B	B	C	C+	B+	B	B–	—	B–	B+	B–
FRACTURE	—	B	B+	B	—	B	B	B	C+	C	B+	B	B
GEORGIA RULE	D+	B	F	D	D	—	F	C	D	D+	C+	B–	D+
THE HOAX	—	B–	C	B+	B	—	B+	B+	B	C	A–	B+	B
HOT FUZZ	B+	C+	C	—	B+	—	B–	B	B	B+	B+	B+	B
LUCKY YOU	C	C	C–	C+	C	—	C+	C–	B–	B	D+	C	C
SHREK THE THIRD	—	B+	—	B	C+	C+	B	C	—	D	B–	B	B–
▲ SPIDER-MAN 3	B–	C–	B–	C–	B+	C	B	C+	A–	B	B–	B–	B–
28 WEEKS LATER	B	C–	B+	—	A–	—	B	B	A–	B+	B+	B	B
WAITRESS	B+	B	B+	A+	B	—	B+	B	—	B	A	A–	B+

*EW READER GRADES come from the Front Row. EW's online reader panel. If you'd like to join, go to frontrowpanel.com/join.

(OPPOSITE PAGE) PETER MOUNTAIN. (THIS PAGE) *PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END*: PETER MOUNTAIN. VERBINSKI: LESTER COHEN/WIREIMAGE.COM. *SPIDER-MAN 3*: MERIE W. WALLACE

Director's Chair

WILLIAM FRIEDKIN

The man who terrified a generation with his head-spinning 1973 masterpiece, *The Exorcist*, is back to scare audiences with *Bug*, an adaptation of—of all things—an Off Broadway play. But don't tell William Friedkin that his latest project is a horror flick. "Horror films are mostly senseless blood and gore today," says Friedkin. "The shortcut is to call [*Bug*] a horror film because it does have some very disturbing elements. I imagine it's difficult to market a film that is not a pure genre film because most of the stuff that comes out today is easily classifiable. And *Bug* clearly isn't."

With *Bug* hitting theaters, Friedkin is looking forward to an eclectic slate. First up, he's premiering a new, racier cut of his 1980 Al Pacino flick *Cruising* at the Cannes film festival ("It's amazing how much it holds up"). Friedkin is also contemplating helming an opera this summer and is planning his next movie. "I'm working on a film called *Coco & Igor*, about the love story between Stravinsky and Chanel." Smells interesting. —*Tim Stack*

Lynn Collins, Judd, and Shannon scratch an itch

Insect Inside

Stuck in a sweltering motel, two desperate people wrestle with a crawling insanity that gets under their skin. **BY LISA SCHWARZBAUM**

Bug
Ashley Judd, Michael Shannon
R, 101 mins.
(Lionsgate)

Here's one creepy love story: Agnes (Ashley Judd), a hard-up woman, meets Peter (Michael Shannon), a weirdo man. The two hole up in Agnes' shabby motel-room home on the edge of desert-nowhere Palookaville, where, when not doing waitress duty at a lesbian bar, she spends her time fearing her recently paroled ex-husband, Jerry (Harry Connick Jr.). And somewhere between sex and a dark night of the soul, Peter passes his paranoid convictions—about government surveillance, secret mind-control experiments, and the invisible insects he says are burrowing into his skin—along to Agnes, who desperately needs something in which to believe. Whatever has bitten Peter, causing him to claw at his own skin, spreads to the woman beside him, too. In time their motel haven becomes one twisted bug hole, which they seal off against the light of day. Woe, let's just say, to anyone who shows up at the door.

Bug, written by Tracy Letts, was originally an intimate, unsettling play in which the confines of the stage could reflect the emotional and psychological claustrophobia of the subject matter. Letts adapted his own script, but the movie is now also inflected with the stylistic details of director William Friedkin, who clearly took on the project with the aesthetic affinity of one who made the creepy and claustrophobic memorably manifest in *The Exorcist*. Here, the filmmaker has to expand the contours of the play's static physical dimensions—a challenge that Friedkin meets with about as much success as possible for an edgy drama so essentially...playlike. The enjoyably icky heart of *Bug* is still contained within the airless, increasingly "bug-proofed" room that becomes Agnes and Peter's whole world. But the director also emphasizes the camera's ability to heighten our sense of dislocation, first by opening with a larger, lonelier desert landscape, and then by prowling restlessly around the tormented protagonists in what amounts to the visual equivalent of what an itch feels like.

Shannon, a compelling stage actor with a mean-baby face that morphs by imperceptible degrees from innocent to madman, originated the role on the stage. And it's difficult to imagine anyone else playing the part, so authoritative is his access to every twitch of Peter's growing mania. But that doesn't mean another filmmaker might not have jettisoned him for a more famous screen presence, and it's to *Bug*'s benefit that Shannon is given free rein to set the pace of the drama's queasy tension.

Then again, as screen-friendly casting goes, Judd is an exciting match; it's rewarding to see her find not only what's tough (she's always good at that) but also what's bruised, soft, and responsive in such a mutable character. Her face stripped bare, Judd is capable of great, bone-weary stillness, and her depiction of unraveling, in symbiotic identification with the new, dangerous man in Agnes' life, is an unexpected pleasure. **B+**

ANTHONY FRIEDKIN (2)

Family Ties

A pair of tormented brothers deal with their father's incarceration.

BY OWEN GLEIBERMAN

Steel City
Thomas Guiry, America Ferrera, John Heard
R, 95 mins.
(Truly Indie)

John Heard has toted up so many years playing sleazebags—he was great as a desperate corrupt cop on *The Sopranos*—that most people probably don't even remember how he started, back in '70s whimsies like *Chilly Scenes of Winter*, where he specialized in playing sweetly confused sensitive guys. Even in his middle-aged rotter phase, Heard has had a quality of buried innocence, and in Brian Jun's quietly absorbing and incisive *Steel City*, that quality shines through his performance as the steel-town father of two troubled young men who has been tossed into the slammer pending a charge of vehicular homicide. (We know that there was a car accident; what we don't learn until later are the telling details.) Even at his most still, Heard is a master at letting you read his wounds.

So is everyone in *Steel City*. It's a drama in which even the most minor character registers as a full, complicated presence—a person who deserves his or her own movie. Thomas Guiry, as Heard's guilt-stricken younger son, is like Ryan Gosling without the moody Method fuss, and America Ferrera, as the girl he falls for, reminds you what a delicate actress she was before she cartoonified herself on *Ugly Betty*. Raymond J. Barry, another '70s vet, plays Heard's sinewy, battle-scarred loner brother with a kind of tensely private coded force. *Steel City* could have used more rhythmic drive, but if Jun keeps weaving together characters this compelling, he could be a major film artist in the making. **B+**

One son finds solace in the arms of America

STEEL CITY: DAVID GARCIA; THE BOSS OF IT ALL: AUTOMAVISION

TRAILER PARK

Why wait to review the movies when we can grade the teasers?

The Bourne Ultimatum
I'm all for seeing Matt Damon back as the amnesiac killing machine, but when the trailer's big kicker is the same exact "Bourne is calling Joan Allen... from right across the street!" gag from *The Bourne Supremacy*, my faith is a little shaken. **B**

Bee Movie
Not as brilliant as those teasers that had Jerry Seinfeld and friends in bug suits on huge sets, but it's still pretty charming. The bit with the Seinfeld bee ramming into the window—I could watch it all day. They should put it on a loop. **B+**

Superbad
The only bad part of this sweet, sweet spot is that you just *know* that by the end of the summer you're gonna hear frat boys and Wall Streeters alike adopt "I am McLovin" with the same insufferable gusto with which they latched onto "sexy time." **A**

The Golden Compass
It's got the requisite epic sweep and heroic derring-do. Nicole Kidman looks appropriately devious while Daniel Craig looks wonderfully unshaven. But points off for so shamelessly trading on our *Lord of the Rings* nostalgia. **B+** *—Marc Bernardin*

FOR MORE TRAILER REVIEWS GO TO EW.COM/TRAILERS

Angel-A

Jamel Debbouze, Rie Rasmussen
R, 90 mins.
(Sony Pictures Classics)

Director Luc Besson can be French in a way that even the French might despise. Take this awful concoction, set in a high-gloss Paris, in which André (Jamel Debbouze), a sawed-off Algerian loser—he's meant to be Chaplinesque, but comes off more like Luis Guzmán with heartburn—is rescued from self-hatred by his guardian supermodel (Rie Rasmussen), who's like an Aryan dominatrix out of Helmut Newton. Surely, she's the perfect messenger to deliver the news that it's the beauty *inside* that counts. *Quel* ick. And *très* tedious. **D–** *—OG*

The Boss of It All

Peter Gantzler, Jens Albinus
Unrated, 100 mins.
(IFC First Take)

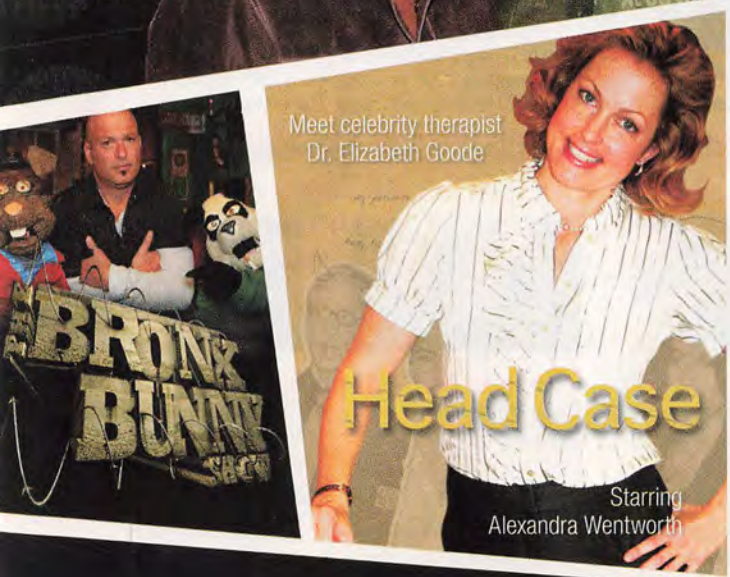
Even when he isn't being the dogmatic scold of the *Dogville* trilogy, Lars von Trier fashions his cinematic pranks like daggers. In this one, though, the blade could use some sharpening. An executive (Peter Gantzler) hires an actor (Jens Albinus) to impersonate his company's (nonexistent) Mr. Big. The actor's inept performance is not only believed—it purges the company's sins. This satire of empty-suit capitalism has scalding moments, but most of it suggests *Being There* meets *The Office* gibberized into theater of the absurd. **B–** *—OG*

Golden Door

Charlotte Gainsbourg, Vincenzo Amato
PG-13, 118 mins. (Miramax)

"Presented" by Martin Scorsese, this Italian immigration drama is a sluggish procedural on what it was like to make the journey to Ellis Island back in the day. As a Sicilian widower (Vincenzo Amato) leads his mother and two sons overseas, we don't see that much that Chaplin didn't cover when he made *The Immigrant* in 1917. Despite a few welcome bits of whimsy, and the lovely presence of *The Science of Sleep*'s Charlotte Gainsbourg as a sad-faced Englishwoman on the boat, *Door* feels as long as a transatlantic voyage. **C** *—Gregory Kirschling*

starz comedy HOUR



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Israeli general Moshe Dayan (left) and the architects of *Six Days*' war

Old Schul

Two insightful documentaries investigate the roots of modern Jewish cultural identity.

BY OWEN GLEIBERMAN

I Have Never Forgotten You: The Life and Legacy of Simon Wiesenthal
Unrated, 105 mins. (Luminous Velocity)

Six Days
Unrated, 105 mins. (Seventh Art)

Two new documentaries offer an eye-opening lesson in how the path of moral certitude doesn't always lead one out of the darkness. *I Have Never Forgotten You: The Life and Legacy of Simon Wiesenthal* is a homespun portrait of the diligent and revered Nazi-hunter. The more ambitious *Six Days* uses arresting archival footage to examine, with fresh insight, how the 1967 Arab-Israeli war remade the Middle East, setting the stage for the world we inhabit today. Taken together, these films shine a light on the very thin line between justice and self-defense, especially when they appear to be the same.

In *I Have Never Forgotten You*, Wiesenthal, the Austrian-born Holocaust survivor who began his global quest to locate escaped Nazis in 1946, says that he's "not a Jewish James Bond," and that's a vital corrective to the image one may have of him. He was a courtly gent, and most of his legwork took place in offices. (After he had fingered Adolf Eichmann in Argentina, it was Mossad agents who took the former Nazi down.) *I Have Never Forgotten You* salutes this bureaucratic detective as the man who first insisted that war crimes are sins that won't die unless they are dragged into the open.

The fascination of *Six Days* is that it was that same thirst for historical justice that fueled Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, though with far more ambiguous results. A tense, taut diary of a high-stakes military chess game, the film presents Gamal Abdel Nasser, the Egyptian president, in intimate photographs, provoking the war out of his too-close-to-the-sun dream of pan-Arab nationalism. It also looks closely at the anxiety and bravura of the Israeli leaders, who knew that they could smash the Arab war machine. *Six Days*, though, makes the potent case that in taking over all of Jerusalem, Israel turned its greatest military triumph into a Pyrrhic victory. A debatable thesis? Yes, but also one that asks the price of certainty. *I Have Never Forgotten You:* **B** *Six Days:* **B+**

BRUNER ILAN

Now Playing

Disturbia
PG-13, 104 mins.
Shia LaBeouf puts his anxieties right out there, but this teen *Rear Window* lacks cleverness. **B–** (#930, April 20) —*OG*

Even Money
R, 108 mins.
An overstructured, overacted indie drama about gambling, addiction, and the sawdusty romanticism of old-time magicians. Name-brand actors (like Forest Whitaker, Kim Basinger, and Danny DeVito) play showily eccentric characters who probably seemed cool in the script. **C–** (#935, May 25) —*LS*

Georgia Rule
R, 111 mins.
Lindsay Lohan plays a baby harlot who spends the summer with her scolding grandmother (Jane Fonda). Leave it to Garry Marshall to make a feel-good movie about alcoholism, nymphomania, and a possible case of child sexual abuse. **C+** (#934, May 18) —*OG*

Once
R, 88 mins.
In Dublin, a 30ish fellow (Glen Hansard) with a worn-out guitar meets a Czech immigrant (Markéta Irglová) in her early 20s. As the two start to play together, the film moves with the dartingly unresolved spirit of a French New Wave film, yet the songs take on the majesty and devotion of a musical dream. **A** (#935, May 25) —*OG*

Paris, Je T'aime
R, 120 mins.
An enchanting parade of 18 shorts. The highlight: Alexander Payne's sublime snapshot of a hilariously stunted tourist (Margo Martindale) who, on a lonely trip to Paris, witnesses the birth of her soul. **A–** (#934, May 18) —*OG*

Shrek the Third
PG, 93 mins.
Something in the polished reliability of the machinery appeals as an antidote to *Spider-Man-3*-type overstimulation: *Shrek the Third* sticks to the swamp it knows best, in a mild climate of palatable jokes about fatherhood, high school, and girl power (the princess squad is awesome). **B–** (#935, May 25) —*LS*

Spider-Man 3
PG-13, 139 mins.
It's product, but it's product that tickles your eyes. Our hero now faces three villains, plus his own demons, and that's a lot of burden to pile on Tobey Maguire's star-child gawk. **B–** (#933, May 11) —*OG*

28 Weeks Later
R, 99 mins.
Think England's zombie-style "rage virus" from *28 Days Later* has been contained, just because U.S. Army types say so? Nuh-uh. Robert Carlyle stars in a haunting sequel for an age of terrorism and AIDS. **B+** (#934, May 18) —*LS*

Waitress
PG-13, 104 mins.
Adrienne Shelly's delectable Dixie screwball romp never loses its spry sense of discovery, mixing flavors as brazenly as Jenna (Keri Russell), a pregnant diner waitress, does in her pies. **A** (#933, May 11) —*OG*

The Wendell Baker Story
PG-13, 99 mins.
This scrappy, quirky tale of an outlaw-dude con man comes at you in air quotes, with Luke Wilson (who also codirected) never showing the tiniest variation in mood. He's Attitude Man, cruising along on his self-amused "charm." **C–** (#935, May 25) —*OG*

DREAMWORKS ANIMATION SKG

THE CHART

BOX OFFICE

1

Shrek the Third

Families mobbed the multiplex to take in part 3 of this monster series, which had the third-best opening weekend ever. But what color will the green guy turn next week when *Pirates* tells him to walk the plank?

THE TOP 20		WEEKEND GROSS*	NUMBER OF SITES †	WEEKEND PER SITE AVERAGE	PERCENTAGE CHANGE	WEEKS IN RELEASE	GROSS TO DATE
1	SHREK THE THIRD	$121.6	4,122	$29,507	—	1	$122.5
2	SPIDER-MAN 3	$29.0	4,324	$6,712	–50	3	$282.4
	Second place is the first loser—unless you're nuzzling up to $300 million domestically, in which case you're pretty much a winner. (And just about covering your budget.) Still, 50 percent is a sharp drop, especially for a hero who can stick to walls.						
3	28 WEEKS LATER	$5.5	2,305	$2,366	–44	2	$18.9
	Horror fans kept this spooky sequel near the top of the chart despite a relatively modest theater count. Personally, if we were looking for scares, we'd probably just see 'Georgia Rule.'						
4	GEORGIA RULE	$3.7	2,531	$1,480	–45	2	$12.9
5	DISTURBIA	$3.7	2,547	$1,465	–21	6	$71.4
6	FRACTURE	$2.3	1,607	$1,418	–23	5	$34.5
7	DELTA FARCE	$1.9	1,931	$959	–46	2	$6.1
8	THE INVISIBLE	$1.3	1,378	$944	–44	4	$17.7
9	HOT FUZZ	$1.3	973	$1,328	–25	5	$21.1
10	BLADES OF GLORY	$1.1	812	$1,345	–25	8	$115.4
11	NEXT	$1.1	1,008	$1,076	–38	4	$16.5
12	WAITRESS	$1.1	116	$9,319	+65	3	$2.1
13	THE EX	$0.7	936	$752	–50	2	$2.6
14	AWAY FROM HER	$0.7	174	$3,938	+115	3	$1.3
	Art-house audiences didn't stay away from director Sarah Polley's heartbreaking drama starring Julie Christie. Her stunning turn as a woman of a certain age struggling with Alzheimer's has put the actress well on her way to a potential Oscar nomination this winter.						
15	MEET THE ROBINSONS	$0.5	941	$536	–72	8	$95.3
16	VACANCY	$0.5	449	$1,028	–44	5	$18.6
17	WILD HOGS	$0.4	512	$825	–40	12	$161.7
18	ARE WE DONE YET?	$0.4	530	$701	–60	7	$47.9
19	BLACK BOOK	$0.4	193	$1,830	–5	7	$2.8
20	THE NAMESAKE	$0.3	253	$1,317	–20	11	$12.6

SOURCE: NIELSEN EDI. WEEKEND OF MAY 18–20 *WEEKEND GROSS AND GROSS-TO-DATE FIGURES IN MILLIONS
† INCLUDES SOME MULTISCREEN THEATERS AND PRINTS SHIPPED AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL SCREENS

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Flags' Jesse Bradford; (above) *Letters'* Watanabe

Battle Hymns

Clint Eastwood's two-film ode to Iwo Jima gets a sincere, stirring five-disc salute.

BY KEN TUCKER

Flags of Our Fathers/ Letters From Iwo Jima
Five-Disc Commemorative Collector's Edition
R, 272 mins., 2006

Clint Eastwood conceived *Flags of Our Fathers* and *Letters From Iwo Jima* as companion pieces, telling the same story—the 1945 battle of Iwo Jima—from opposing (American and Japanese) sides. You can purchase each as separate two-disc sets (the movie plus a batch of extras). But do you need or want the five-disc edition, with an extra disc containing two Iwo Jima docs?

Let's start with Eastwood's films. Seen back-to-back, they grow in artistic vision and emotional wallop. *Flags* follows the lives of the men who planted the flag on the island, the ones seen in Joe Rosenthal's iconic image. This movie grapples with a weight that became, to these soldiers, nearly as heavy as waging war itself: the semi-celebrity that went along with starring in one of the most reproduced photographs ever taken. There's a certain inevitability to *Flags*—we know the outcome of the battle, and we know that ordinary citizens usually have trouble when fame is thrust upon them—but the movie has a propulsive momentum, and the DVD includes a fine making-of doc (it's always interesting to watch Eastwood's low-key, let's-just-shoot-it directing style).

By comparison, *Letters* feels new. Working from a story by Paul Haggis (*Crash*) and screenwriter Iris Yamashita, Eastwood immediately absorbs us in the experiences of the Japanese troops led by Lieut. Gen. Tadamichi Kuribayashi, played with poignant terseness by Ken Watanabe. Kuribayashi becomes a bold yet almost tragic figure; his war strategy resulted in a battle that was expected to last less than a week, but took nearly 40 days and resulted in the deaths of more than 20,000 Japanese troops. His rigorously harsh campaign is contrasted with the tender letters he writes home to his family (they serve as the film's narration).

Iwo Jima's extras include a couple of 20-minute featurettes that highlight the lengths to which Eastwood and his crew went for accuracy: In "Red Sun, Black Sand," he makes the culturally acute point that while our soldiers were sent into battle with the hope of returning home, their Japanese counterparts were "told they weren't coming back." Eastwood's World War II diptych is neatly complemented by the fifth disc, which contains the A&E-produced *Heroes of Iwo Jima* documentary and a 1945 U.S. government-produced short, *To the Shores of Iwo Jima*. The A&E film, narrated by Gene Hackman, is first-rate; in fact, it nearly equals *Flags* as an examination of the famous photograph and its aftermath.

Taken together, the five-disc edition is not a rip-off, but a thoughtfully assembled package that will satisfy both novices and students of this still-vivid, moving chapter in history. **A–**

Backstory

+ In his native Japan, *Letters From Iwo Jima* star Kazunari Ninomiya (above)—who plays Saigo, the sensitive soldier who yearns to live long enough to see his newborn daughter—is a famous pop star.

MERIE W. WALLACE (3)

Saved by DVD

'KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL'

After two years in the deep freeze, Fox's energetic restaurant-set comedy is finally back on the menu

WHAT IT WAS The 2005 single-camera sitcom, based on the 2000 best-seller from culinary guru Anthony Bourdain, starred Bradley Cooper (left) as bad-boy chef Jack Bourdain, reigning over the wild staff at chic NYC restaurant Nolita.

WHAT VIEWERS SAW Fox yanked the series after airing only four of the 13 half-hour episodes. That left just enough time to introduce pastry chef Seth's crush on hostess Tanya (Jaime King), kitchen newbie Jim's attempts to move up the food chain, and Jack's love/hate relationship with the owner's daughter Mimi.

WHAT VIEWERS MISSED Tanya falls for the innocent Jim—much to Seth's dismay—and Mimi is promoted from head waitress to owner after blackmailing her father about his mistress. In the finale, Jack's womanizing ways come to an end when he falls for a rival chef during a prestigious culinary competition.

WORTH THE RESCUE? Yes, if you've got a taste for sharp, risqué comedy. The unaired shows let supporting players like Frank Langella and *Harold & Kumar*'s John Cho shine—and Cooper makes Jack an appetizing antihero. *—Paul Katz*

The 40 Year-Old Virgin

Double Your Pleasure Edition

Steve Carell

Unrated, 133 mins., 2005

The heartwarming story of a middle-aged innocent's quest for love and a hairless chest. **EXTRAS** A trailer for (and free ticket to) director/co-writer Judd Apatow's new comedy, *Knocked Up*, seems to be this edition's sole reason for being. Deleted scenes and commentary are holdovers from previous releases; new bonuses like unrevealing audition tapes and old promotional specials from Comedy Central and Cinemax are flimsy. It's ironic that a DVD about a virgin would try so hard to screw you. **C–** *—Josh Wolk*

The Good German

George Clooney, Cate Blanchett

R, 108 mins., 2006

When a reporter (Clooney) reconnects with a beautiful fräulein (Blanchett) in postwar Berlin, murder, black-market intrigue, and bitter love triangles unapologetically evoke *Casablanca*. Steven Soderbergh's murky shadows and washed-out whites work better at home, flickering on the small screen like an old *Late Late Movie*, but his determined homage to 1940s Hollywood flirts with gimmickry. Only Blanchett feels authentically film noir, as her sly eyes transform the fair-skinned actress into an alluringly dark siren. **EXTRAS** None. **B–** *—Jeff Labrecque*

Cowboy Up!

John Wayne would've turned 100 on May 26. Is the Duke still one of Hollywood's greatest stars? Mull it over with the celebratory 14-film 'Century Collection.' These here are a few highlights, pilgrim. —Gregory Kirschling

THE MAN WHO SHOT LIBERTY VALANCE (1962) One of Wayne's richest Westerns with director John Ford sets the actor's brawn and James Stewart's brains against Lee Marvin's memorable villain. The trick ending feels outlandish and highly theatrical, but oddly stirring and ahead of its time.

DONOVAN'S REEF (1963) Not a fan of Westerns? Look to the collection's aviation drama *The High and the Mighty* (one of the first disaster films). Or check out *Reef*, an M&M-colored, South Pacific-set action comedy that boasts a couple of good bar brawls and, again, a feisty Lee Marvin.

EL DORADO (1966) In this unofficial rehash of *Rio Bravo* (probably Wayne's best "John Wayne" movie, but not included in this set), the Duke pairs with Robert Mitchum in a Western that milks a lot of comedy—some intentional, some not—out of Wayne's character getting shot by a woman.

TRUE GRIT (1969) Of course they gave Wayne the Best Actor Oscar for playing fat, one-eyed deputy marshal Rooster Cogburn. Deconstructing his cowboy persona in the end-of-old-Hollywood era, he takes the reins in his teeth and charges through with a rollicking star turn.

THE SHOOTIST (1976) Directed by *Dirty Harry*'s Don Siegel, Wayne's bloody final film features the actor as a tough SOB dying of cancer, but not quietly. Since Wayne and (arguably) Westerns would both be dead by the end of the '70s, the movie is almost eerily poignant.

KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL: MICHAEL DESMOND; THE 40 YEAR-OLD VIRGIN: SUZANNE HANOVER; THE GOOD GERMAN: MELINDA SUE GORDON;

Free Zone

Natalie Portman, Hanna Laslo
Unrated, 90 mins., 2005

There were no fake sobs or glycerine tears in the seven-minute opening shot of Portman weeping in extreme close-up. She clearly brought the pain to this Israeli road picture about two women—a heartbroken American student (Jerusalem-born Portman) and a no-nonsense chauffeur (Laslo)—who bully and cajole their way across Middle Eastern borders. But the ham-fisted allegory about clashing cultures gets bogged down by its good intentions and woe-is-us speechifying. EXTRAS A sleep-inducing radio interview with director Amos Gitai. **B–** *—Christine Spines*

Ball of Fire

Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck
Unrated, 112 mins., 1941

As far as I'm concerned, this screwball comedy holds its own against better-known classics like *His Girl Friday* and *It Happened One Night*. Stanwyck and her (as Cooper puts it) "extremely disturbing body" star as Sugarpuss O'Shea, a nightclub singer hiding from gangsters in a townhouse full of fuddy-duddy professors. When Cooper catches her eye, the movie—coscripted by Billy Wilder—morphs from an adorable *Snow White* farce into a touching paean to falling for a nerd ("[He] looks like a giraffe, and I love him!"). EXTRAS None. But who cares? **A** *—GK*

Hannibal Rising

Gaspard Ulliel, Gong Li, Rhys Ifans
Unrated, 131 mins., 2007

Planet Prequel is a dismal place where the unfortunate visitor can gawk at such monuments to Tinseltown's greed—and lack of imagination—as *Dumb and Dumberer* and *Butch and Sundance: The Early Days*. This fright-free Hannibal Lecter genesis story—set decades prior to the events portrayed in *Manhunter* and *Silence of the Lambs*—is no better than its "pre-" predecessors, despite a suitably lean and hungry performance from Ulliel as the young Mr. Cannibal. EXTRAS include two making-of docs and some unmemorable deleted scenes. **C** *—Clark Collis*

THE CHART

DVD SALES

1

BECAUSE I SAID SO

Somehow, this middling comedy (starring Diane Keaton as a meddling mom) beat out Ben Stiller *and* the Dreams.

TOP 20		LAST WEEK	BOX OFFICE GROSS TO DATE*	WEEKS IN RELEASE	EW GRADE
1	**BECAUSE I SAID SO** *Need your Lauren Graham fix now that 'Gilmore Girls' is over? She pops up here as Mandy Moore's older sister—and hits big screens on June 22, as Steve Carell's wife in 'Evan Almighty.'*	—	$42.7	1	C+
2	**NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM**	2	$250.6	3	C–
3	**DREAMGIRLS**	1	$103.4	2	B
4	**MUSIC AND LYRICS** *Bonuses on the DVD of the Hugh Grant–Drew Barrymore romp include deleted scenes, a gag reel, and—our favorite—the music video for the opening song "Pop! Goes My Heart," featuring Grant in full '80s pop-star regalia. Think sunglasses, feathered hair, and supertight white pants.*	—	$50.6	1	B–
5	**CATCH AND RELEASE**	—	$15.3	1	C–†
6	**THE QUEEN**	5	$56..4	3	B
7	**DÉJÀ VU**	4	$64.0	3	C+†
8	**HAPPILY N'EVER AFTER**	3	$15.6	2	C–
9	**HAPPY FEET**	7	$198.0	7	A–
10	**THE PAINTED VEIL**	—	$8.1	1	B
11	**ALPHA DOG**	6	$15.3	2	C+
12	**CHARLOTTE'S WEB**	11	$82.6	6	A
13	**THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS**	14	$162.6	7	B+
14	**SMOKIN' ACES**	10	$35.8	4	B–
15	**THE HITCHER**	8	$16.4	2	C–†
16	**THAT '70S SHOW: SEASON 6** *Groovy guest stars on the sixth season of the throwback series include Brooke Shields, Shannon Elizabeth, Seth Green, Rachel Bilson, and Alyson Hannigan.*	—	—	1	—
17	**CASINO ROYALE**	20	$167.0	9	B+
18	**PLANET EARTH**	13	—	3	A
19	**THE SANDLOT: HEADING HOME**	9	—	2	B+
20	**THE HOLIDAY**	25	$63.2	9	B

SOURCES: RENTRAK RETAIL ESSENTIALS FOR THE WEEK ENDING MAY 12, 2007; NIELSEN EDI *IN MILLIONS
† ORIGINAL THEATRICAL GRADE

In Defense of...

'SUMMER SCHOOL'

NICHOLAS FONSECA goes back to Ocean Front High, where a laid-back teacher and his slacker students get an A in chemistry

I'm not being facetious when I say that SUMMER SCHOOL remains the crowning achievement on Mark Harmon's résumé. Fans of '80s teen comedies think it's too tame—nary a breast is exposed, hardly a swear word uttered—but I've always admired its shaggy, what-the-hell vibe. The whole thing's a perfect storm of casting and creativity: Aside from Harmon's obvious ease in the role of layabout teacher Freddy Shoop, *School*—just out in a "Life's a Beach" special edition (PG-13, 97 mins., 1987)—coasts on the hysterical chemistry between the nine young actors who played his underachieving remedial-English students, a knowing script from a 26-year-old screenwriter, a corny ending that copies *From Here to Eternity* yet still feels original, and Kirstie Alley's saucy turn as the one woman Freddy can't charm. Films this breezy don't typically lend themselves to major DVD extras, but Harmon (above, with Alley) lets loose a few interesting secrets in his commentary track with director Carl Reiner, helpfully pointing out the onscreen moment when he broke his shoulder. And in a making-of featurette, we learn that Alley beat out none other than Fran Drescher for her role. *Now* who's laughing through her nose?

HANNIBAL RISING: KEITH HAMSHERE; BECAUSE I SAID SO: SUZANNE TENNER

EVIL HAS A NEW ENEMY
HEX
SEASON PREMIERE JUNE 2
SATURDAYS 9PM ET/PT
BBC
AMERICA

Hidden miss: Handley and O'Grady

Dawson's Creak

Creek creator Kevin Williamson stumbles with The CW's dull mishmash of teen-soap clichés.

BY GILLIAN FLYNN

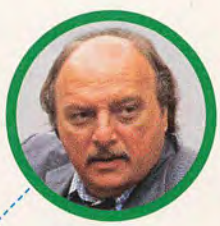
Hidden Palms
Wednesdays, 8 p.m.
The CW

The CW's *Hidden Palms* wants to be *The O.C.* meets *Twin Peaks*. Or maybe that's *One Tree Hill* meets *Veronica Mars*. *What About Brian* mixed with a dash of *Columbo*? Whatever its muddled aspirations, *Palms*, from *Dawson's Creek* creator Kevin Williamson, is an un-eerie, under-soapy misfire, no matter how many girls sun themselves in bikinis, no matter how many cocktails are gulped, no matter how goosey-gotcha the "mystery" gets.

After witnessing his dad's suicide, high schooler Johnny (*The O.C.*'s Taylor Handley) relocates to Palm Springs, Calif., with his mom (*NYPD Blue*'s Gail O'Grady) and her new hubby. Trying to stay sober after a rehab stint, Johnny soon falls in with a troublesome crowd, including his invasive next-door neighbor Cliff (*The O.C.*'s Michael Cassidy) and hot, tearful Greta (Amber Heard, who, I must add, played a "salesgirl" on one episode of *The O.C.*). It's a bit bizarre watching these former *O.C.* secondaries in lead roles: Handley played obsessive Oliver Trask; Cassidy was that goody boy Zach Stevens. Cassidy's elevated, nasal delivery works much better here. As a sinister prepster with a passel of secrets—all madras and muscle tension—he's the most interesting thing about the show.

Soon after his arrival, Johnny starts receiving instant messages. They say things like "Be careful." (Yikes!) Then he writes things like "WHO IS THIS?" (Tedium building.) After many such unproductive exchanges, the IMer claims to be Eddie, the dead teen who used to live in Johnny's room. So did Eddie kill himself? Was he murdered? Or is he still alive? And what do Greta and Cliff—who have many cryptic conversations on the topic—know? Hey, great thrillers have been made from slimmer plotlines. But they usually had something else to offer. *Palms*, even in its first few episodes, feels like it's padding scenes—playing for time with shots of swimming pools and kids dancing and Greta weepily collapsing on a golf course, all with underlying pop songs. It's like one long, inane music video. Damien Rice's "The Blower's Daughter" makes a predictable early appearance, threatening to overtake Jeff Buckley's "Hallelujah" as TV's most overused "song of poignancy."

Even the dialogue is mediocre, a surprise coming from Williamson, who virtually created knowing teen articulators with *Dawson's*. Here, the characters yak a lot but say nothing, which is either Williamson's commentary on the overwired, self-involved e-generation, or...mediocre dialogue. "Moments work really great—anything beyond that really doesn't," opines Greta in a slap-a-seagull-on-it-and-you've-got-a-poster bit of wisdom. *Palms* is ultimately just that trite. **C–**



Backstory

+ Along with assembling vets from *The O.C.*, *Palms* reunites *NYPD Blue* veterans Sharon Lawrence and Gail O'Grady. Bring on the Dennis Franz cameo!
+ Though set in Palm Springs, the series is shot in a cheaper arid location: Phoenix.

Pack up the wives.

BIG LOVE

Moving to Mondays

June 11, 9pm

HBO

PLAY TONE

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SNAP JUDGMENT: UPFRONTS

Last week we weighed in on NBC's and ABC's new fall shows. Here's a critical look at the offerings from CBS, Fox, and The CW. —*Gillian Flynn*

Viva Laughlin

Canterbury's Law

MOST PROMISING

Viva Laughlin (CBS) A gambling drama-slash-musical: Think semiregular guest star Hugh Jackman as a big-shot moneyman, crooning "Sympathy for the Devil." At the very least, interesting.

Reaper (The CW) On his 21st birthday, our hero (*The Loop*'s Bret Harrison) discovers his parents have sold his soul to Satan (*24*'s Ray Wise). From Kevin Smith, it boasts humor that's a study in perfect timing.

K-Ville (Fox) Set in post-Katrina New Orleans, this cop drama has a nice hard edge—plus, after his stunning turn as Antwon Mitchell on *The Shield*, it's great to see Anthony Anderson in a well-earned lead role.

LEAST PROMISING

Moonlight (CBS) Contrary to the vampire stereotype, this bland, sad-sack, crime-fighting bloodsucker (Australian Alex O'Loughlin) is so uncharismatic he's begging for a stake in the heart.

Life Is Wild (The CW) A gooey-looking drama about a troubled family that relocates to South Africa so the teens can get grounded and look at cheetahs.

Canterbury's Law (Fox) Julianna Margulies returns to series TV...for this? Yet another legal drama about a lawyer who pushes the envelope too far and/or doesn't know where to draw the line. I'll draw the line at this unoriginal premise, thanks.

SOUND BITES

"NBC announced Monday it will once again renew its long-running drama series *Law & Order*. Which, as near as I can tell, is about a kindly old grandfather who teaches cynicism to a series of supermodels."
—AMY POEHLER ON *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE*

"Oh, please don't become one of those 'I had a heart attack, let me express my every thought' types."
—EMILY (KELLY BISHOP), AS HER HUSBAND, RICHARD (EDWARD HERRMANN), BEGINS TO WAX SENTIMENTAL ABOUT HIS DAUGHTER, ON *GILMORE GIRLS*

"It's like the first 15 minutes of *Extreme Home Makeover*."
—KEVIN (MATTHEW RHYS), DISMISSING THE DECOR OF A BANQUET HALL, ON *BROTHERS & SISTERS*

"Once I am officially regional manager, my first order of business will be to demote Jim Halpert. So I will need a new number two. My ideal choice? Jack Bauer. But he is unavailable. Fictional. And overqualified."
—DWIGHT (RAINN WILSON) ON *THE OFFICE*

THE CHART

THE RATINGS

1 AMERICAN IDOL

Mindy Doo's untimely ouster from the final three? Shocking. *Idol*'s first-place finish on the chart? Considerably less so.

THE TOP 20

		VIEWERS*	LAST WEEK
1	**AMERICAN IDOL** Fox, Wednesday, 9 p.m.	28.1	1
2	**AMERICAN IDOL** Fox, Tuesday, 8 p.m.	24.2	2
3	**GREY'S ANATOMY** ABC, Thursday, 9 p.m.	22.6	4
4	**HOUSE** Fox, Tuesday, 9:02 p.m.	21.2	3
5	**CSI** CBS, Thursday, 9 p.m.	20.4	6
6	**DANCING WITH THE STARS** ABC, Monday, 8 p.m.	19.6	5
7	**DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES** ABC, Sunday, 9 p.m. ➔ *The season went out with a bang (or, more accurately, a noose)—2.7 million more viewers tuned in to the 'Desperate' finale than to the previous week's episode. ABC's other Sunday shows, 'Extreme Makeover' (17th) and 'Brothers & Sisters' (18th), did well too, adding 2.2 million and 700K viewers, respectively.*	18.8	9
8	**DANCING WITH THE STARS** ABC, Tuesday, 9 p.m.	18.4	8
9	**CSI: MIAMI** CBS, Monday, 10 p.m.	16.6	7
10	**BOB BARKER: 50 YEARS** CBS, Thursday, 8 p.m. ➔ *The retiring 'Price' man scored with this tribute and a 'Price Is Right' prime-time special (11th), both of which won their time slots.*	14.3	—
11	**THE PRICE IS RIGHT MILLION DOLLAR SPECTACULAR** CBS, Wednesday, 8 p.m.	14.0	—
12	**THE KING OF QUEENS** CBS, Monday, 9 p.m.	13.6	14
13	**CSI (R)** CBS, Thursday, 10:01 p.m.	13.3	—
14	**CRIMINAL MINDS** CBS, Wednesday, 9 p.m.	13.2	16
15	**CSI: NY** CBS, Wednesday, 10 p.m.	13.1	17
16	**LAW & ORDER: SVU** NBC, Tuesday, 10 p.m.	12.8	22
17	**EXTREME MAKEOVER: HOME EDITION** ABC, Sunday, 8 p.m.	12.6	27
18	**LOST** ABC, Wednesday, 10 p.m.	12.3	18
	BROTHERS & SISTERS ABC, Sunday, 9 p.m.	12.3	19
20	**HEROES** NBC, Monday, 9 p.m.	11.5	21
	OFF THE CHART *Maybe they should try Chinese checkers? The debut of ABC's 'National Bingo Night' (54th) only wrangled 6.2 million fans.*		

* IN MILLIONS WEEK OF MAY 14–20, 2007 SOURCE: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH

BY JOSH WOLK

WHAT to WATCH

A day-to-day guide to notable programs*

Turtle, Vincent, Drama, and Eric: the Reservoir Pups

SEASON FINALE

SUNDAY 6.3

10–10:30PM

Entourage HBO, TV-MA

A satisfying, hilarious conclusion to what has been an uneven season 3. (For reasons best known to the HBO programming elves, season 4 starts in just two weeks.) Our now (comparatively) poverty-stricken Tinseltown quartet is forced apart when they have to give up the mansion they shared for more modest separate cribs. The relocations trigger a series of events that climaxes with Debi Mazar's awesomely foul-mouthed publicist dropping three F-bombs and the phrase "transient crack whore" in around 0.0007 seconds. How is all of this connected to Johnny Drama's recollection of a sexual misdeed during the 1999 *Viking Quest* convention? It isn't, really. We just thought you should be warned. **A–** *—Clark Collis*

Monday 5.28

Series Debut

9–10PM

Ex-Wives Club

ABC, TV-14-L

Freshly split divorcées get on with their lives with the aid of notorious exes Angie Everhart, Shar Jackson, and Marla Maples—the Super Friends of alimony.

Season Premiere

10–10:30PM

The Simple Life Goes to Camp

E!, TV-PG

Why would anyone who likes kids let Paris and Nicole into his or her camp? Why not just pump bees into the cabins? Snooty, skinny, disaffected bees.

Obi-Wan Kenobi

9–11PM

Star Wars: The Legacy Revealed

History, TV-PG

After 30 years of fan obsession, another decoding of the saga's mythic DNA is bound to feel stale—unless you're jazzed at the prospect of watching Newt Gingrich, Nancy Pelosi, and Dan Rather geek out. B– *—Marc Bernardin*

Tuesday 5.29

12:30–1:30PM

The Young and the Restless

CBS, TV-14-D

America's Next Top Model judge Nigel Barker cameos as the host of a fictional reality show, *Extreme Catwalk*. Aging soap fans sure love it when daytime TV puts the meta in Metamucil.

Season Premiere

8–9PM

Look-a-Like

TV Guide, TV-G

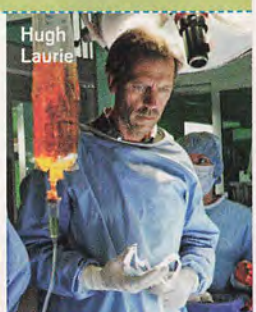
Someone gets transformed into Celine Dion. The only logical explanation is that it was done under duress.

10–11PM

The Shield

FX, TV-MA

A deadly plan that could solve the San Marcos murders *and* save Vic's job? That strike team sure knows how to multitask.



9–10PM

House

Fox, TV-14-L

Even after three years, watching TV's most misanthropic M.D. perform medical miracles every week is still just what the doctor ordered. On the season ender, he tries to bring a beatless heart back to life, then proves his own may be beyond reviving during a surprising confrontation with his staff. A *—Benjamin Svetkey*

ENTOURAGE: CLAUDETTE BARIUS; STAR WARS: THE LEGACY REVEALED: ©&™ LUCASFILM LTD.; HOUSE: ISABELLA VOSMIKOVA

*TIMES ARE EASTERN DAYLIGHT AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Wednesday 5.30

SERIES DEBUT

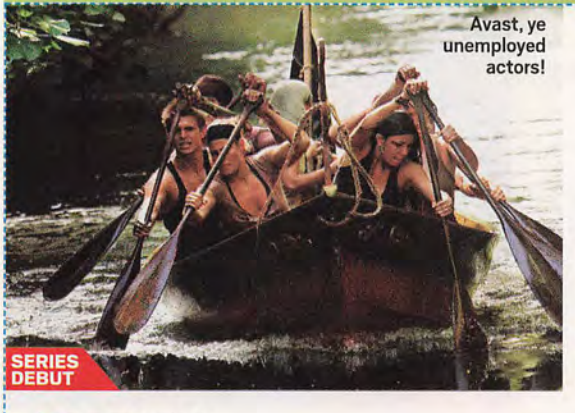
–9PM
The Next Best Thing: Who Is the Greatest Celebrity Impersonator?
ABC
Title 1, description 0.

8–10PM
Most Outrageous Moments
NBC, TV-14-DL
Four episodes in a row, which technically means that outrageousness records are constantly being topped.

8–11PM*
Craft in America
PBS, TV-PG
Could your macramé be killing you? And what you don't know about god's-eyes may surprise you. Tonight, on PBS!
**check local listings*

10–11PM
Reunited: The Real World Vegas MTV, TV-14
Five years after the Palms' cleaning service scraped the last trace of bacteria out of the Vegas *Real World*'s hot tub, the entire septet reunites to live in their old suite. The once-crazed Brynn is now a reformed mother of two, while Frank is determined to bed everyone short of Wayne Newton, perhaps trying to make up for his last milquetoasty go-round. Reality lifer Trishelle seems thrilled to have found more cameras, but it's estranged pals Irulan and Arissa who start the mini-season's first screaming match. They all seem a little old for this sort of thing, which only makes me feel older for wanting to watch it. B

Thursday 5.31



↘ PREVIEW

8–9pm
Pirate Master CBS
When most people walked out of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies, they said "Arrr!" for a few days and moved on. Not Mark Burnett: He turned it into a reality show and probably made more pieces of eight than the rest of us will ever see. The game: 15 young hotties (and one guy who looks like Steve Zahn after eating *Survivor*'s Rupert) set sail, searching for doubloons and trying not to be the next one voted off the poop deck. There's also a haves/have-nots element, like the one that fizzled on last season's *Survivor* and *Apprentice*. I'm not sure what movie Burnett saw to inspire that, but did he have to see it three times?

8–9PM
Man-Made: The Flashlight
National Geographic, TV-G
Oh, mighty flashlight! Let us explore the history of how you transformed handheld illumination with your bright, shining brilliance! In short: Screw you, candles.

9–11PM
Shame
Showtime, TV-14
A Pakistani woman sentenced to be gang-raped for her brother's crime speaks out in this documentary.

10–10:59PM
Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip
NBC, TV-14-DL
Jordan has pregnancy troubles during a live show, while Matt's pill popping goes public. And it's all so unimportant because *Tom's brother is in Afghanistan*!

Friday 6.01

8–8:30PM
The Lair here!, TV-MA
Some series can (and should) be judged by their credits. Written by Fred Olen Ray (*Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers*) and costarring erstwhile adult-film actor Colton Ford, this gay-vampire thriller features groaners like a randy club bouncer declaring "I'm also the service manager!" and a gratuitous 71-second shower scene where newspaper reporter Thom (David Moretti) scrubs his washboard abs till they gleam. Hard work. No wonder the dude takes a nap after his boyfriend becomes the possible victim of a killer preying on chiseled, enthusiastically groomed men. **D–** *—Michael Slezak*

8–10PM
TV's Funniest Moments
Fox, TV-14-DLSV
You will never, ever laugh harder. So swears the comedy-savvy network that brought you *Monty* and *Life on a Stick*.

9–11PM
40 Most Softsational Soft-Rock Songs
VH1, TV-PG-L
Because on a Friday night you're feeling neither hardtacular nor adult-contemporiffic.

10–11PM
Numb3rs
CBS, TV-PG-V
Buzz Aldrin guesting in an episode about Internet sexual predators was a better idea before that diapered stalking astronaut got arrested. Now it's just bad space PR. (R)

Saturday 6.02

7–9PM
Air Bud V: Spikes Back
Animal Planet, TV-G
Get it? Because the pup has learned how to play volleyball! It makes me impatient for him to master fishing in *Air Bud VI: Air Bud Gets Worms*.

8–9:30PM
John Tucker Must Die
HBO, PG-13
In early June, even the pay networks stop trying.

8–11PM
Marco Polo
Hallmark, TV-PG-V
If you think *Lost*'s Ian Somerhalder as the famed explorer is miscasting, brace yourself: Brian Dennehy is Kublai Khan. What happened, George Dzundza couldn't nail the Mongolian accent?

OLD JOKE A-COMIN'!

8–11:10PM
Minority Report
ABC, TV-14-V
Who did the precogs' hair—Britney? (This joke brought to you by three months ago.)

10–11PM
Gotta Get It
Food, TV-G
The ultimate kebab fork: You gotta get it! The ultimate frittata tongs, however, can wait.

New Series...Sort Of
10–11PM
The Graham Norton Show
BBC America, TV-MA
How does the cheeky Brit's new talk show (with guest Elijah Wood) differ from his umpteen others? Forty percent more sauciness.

Sunday 6.03

Flay-ed alive: chef Bobby Flay (left)

9–11PM
The Next Food Network Star
Food, TV-G
Watching pretty people make yummy food is fun, so why is this contest so mediocre? Is it the constant Food Network self-congratulation or the boring judges? (Oooh, how'd they ever cast their own marketing exec?) Either way, you're better off saving your appetite for Bravo's *Top Chef* on June 6. **B–** *—Jessica Shaw*

7:30–10PM
Bad Boys 2
Fox, TV-14-LV
I saw this at a drive-in and it made me wish for carbon monoxide poisoning. But hey, maybe it plays better with commercials.

8–10PM
2007 MTV Movie Awards
MTV, TV-14-DL
I hope host Sarah Silverman's potty mouth doesn't ruin the stars' special night. Marlon Wayans worked too hard to get a Best Kiss nom for *Little Man* to have it tarnished with puerile humor.

8–9PM
Larry the Cable Guy: Morning Constitutions
Comedy Central, TV-14
If it's half as funny as *Delta Force*...that'll make it twice as funny as lupus.

9–10PM
Friday Night Lights
NBC, TV-14
We'll keep telling you to watch this until you make it a hit. Trust me, you'll get tired before we do, so make things easy on yourself and tune in. (R)

9–10PM
The Sopranos
HBO, TV-MA
It's the penultimate episode, and what with Tony doling out curb jobs to Phil's men and AJ suicidal, a happy ending looks as unlikely as *Cleaver 2*.

10–11PM
The Real Queens of England
BBC America, TV-14
Visit with the U.K.'s vainest men, who differ from America's queens in that they strut like peacocks on the *other* side of the sidewalk.

10–11PM
Army Wives Lifetime, TV-PG
You can practically hear the pitch meeting over the opening credits: "It's Wisteria Lane...on an Army base. Bam!" The basic formula of four ladies (including *JAG*'s Catherine Bell and *NYPD Blue*'s Kim Delaney), one town, and a quadrillion secrets has been gently tweaked to put an irony-free spin on estro-drama staples like domestic abuse and marital strife. Throw a few handsome men in uniform into the mix, and you've got a patriotic sudser that could grab audiences eager to trade tongue-in-cheek network dramedies for an earnest soap about women who are scrappy, sensitive, and stoic. Just don't call them desperate. **B** *—Adam Markovitz*

MINORITY REPORT: DAVID JAMES

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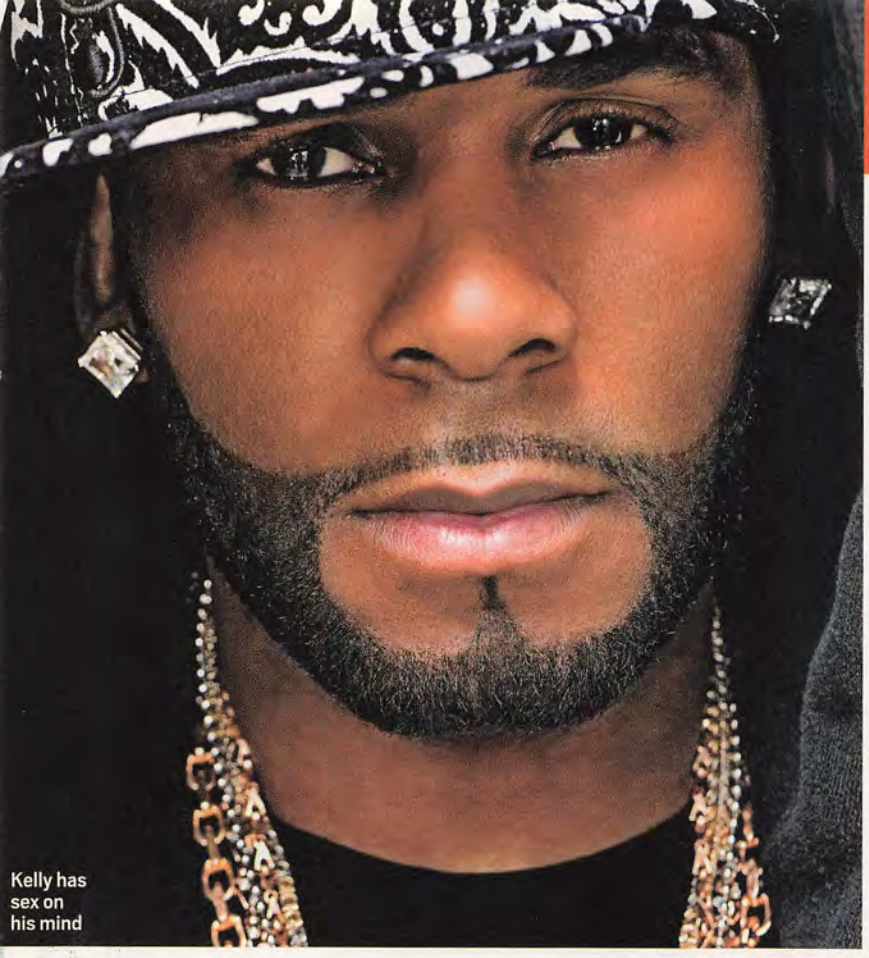

Kelly has sex on his mind

Lust Cause

R. Kelly lets his libido do the talking—and flirts with hip-hop—to laughable effect.

BY CHRIS WILLMAN

R. Kelly
Double Up
(Jive)
R&B/Hip-Hop

R. Kelly's fondness for fornication isn't exactly a state secret. Yet there are moments of such supersonically unhinged sexual mania on *Double Up*—his ninth and horniest album—that you can only conclude that the guy who brought you the nutso R&B opera "Trapped in the Closet" has completely lost whatever was left of his dirty mind. Even Kelly's most earnest fans may not be sure whether to swoon, laugh, or cringe at the monkey and elephant noises in "The Zoo," which lead to this pillow talk: "I got you so wet, it's like a rainforest/Like *Jurassic Park*, except I'm your sexosaurus, babe." Then there's the Prince-esque "Sex Planet," teeming with space-age metaphors that go exactly where any junior-high boy would hope: "My rocket is so full of fuel, baby.... Girl, I promise this will be painless/We're gonna make a trip to planet Uranus." (Can an unfortunate reference to a "black hole" be next? Yes, it can.)

Those are just the sensitive slow jams, for the ladies. Much more of the new CD finds Kelly eschewing straight-up R&B balladry in favor of recasting himself as a hard-boiled hip-hop playa who's hitting the gentlemen's clubs with guest rappers such as Ludacris, Chamillionaire, and Nelly. Occasionally this results in a genuinely sexy nugget like "I'm a Flirt," where he hooks up with T.I. and T-Pain over an infectious groove of percussive piano that's "Bennie and the Jets" gone urban. But more typical is the mundane way he and Snoop Dogg trade lewd banalities in the tired title track. "Man, three's company/B----, call me Jack Trippa," Kelly croons, while Snoop barks out, "Kiss me, kiss her, now kiss each other," seemingly narrating a children's primer on three-ways. As recently as 2004's relatively PG *Happy People/U Saved Me*, Kelly was still getting his Marvin Gaye on; now it's as if he's claimed 2 Live Crew as his true soul godfathers.

But Kelly is kidding, right? If you've ever watched him lip-synch "Closet" in its entirety with a straight face, you know this is a riddle for the ages. Is a sex-as-food anthem like "Sweet Tooth" ("You're lookin' like a big ole piece of cake") deliberately campy? Your guess is as good as ours. And best of luck solving the larger puzzle of whether it's denial or defiance that has him ratcheting up the kinkiness even as his sex-crimes charges move closer to trial. But when he segues from "Sex Planet" into "Rise Up," his treacly tribute to the Virginia Tech victims, it's perverse in a way he couldn't have intended. Just as surely as Justin brought sexy back, Kelly is bringing slightly creepy back. **C**

>DOWNLOAD THIS: "I'm a Flirt"

Backstory

+ *Double Up* doesn't include any new episodes of Kelly's "Closet" saga. But fans of both the video and one of its stars—an incontinent little person (above)—will be delighted that chapters 13 to 22 are expected to come out on DVD this summer.

Full 'Moon'

The late Elliott Smith lives on through a two-disc set of stunning tracks.

BY SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON

Smith leaves a rich legacy

EW PICK

Elliott Smith
New Moon
(Kill Rock Stars)
Indie Rock

Four years ago, Elliott Smith died at age 34 after battles with depression and substance abuse. The Portland-based singer-songwriter left behind a loyal fan base, five beautifully bleak solo CDs, and a wealth of unreleased material. *New Moon*, his second posthumous album (following 2004's *From a Basement on the Hill*), collects 24 of those early recordings—and while archival compilations are often hit-or-miss, *Moon*'s two cohesive CDs prove as emotionally powerful as anything in his catalog.

"Sometimes I feel like only a cold still life," Smith confesses in the elegiac opener "Angel in the Snow," shrouding his whisper-soft vocals in spare acoustic chords. Two songs later, he's lashing out—"I'm so sick and tired of trying to change your mind/When it's so easy to disconnect mine"—on the surging "High Times." The intensity of diverse performances like these, recorded between '94 and '97, would soon be rewarded. In 1998, his song from *Good Will Hunting* "Miss Misery" (included here in a lovely, hushed rough-draft form) scored him an Oscar nod, while a deal with DreamWorks Records later that year nudged him deeper into the mainstream, stoking his potential.

Ultimately, it's Smith's tragic fate that looms over *Moon*, lending a bittersweet tinge to its deceivingly simple, cathartic tunes. Still, those mourning his loss can take heart knowing that the troubled troubadour has left us with one more masterpiece. **A** >DOWNLOAD THIS: **"Going Nowhere"**

BEFORE SMITH...

...there was influential British folkie Nick Drake. Smith's gentle strumming and downcast lyrics often draw comparisons to the work of Drake—who also died young, at age 26, in 1974. (Smith once said he had only a casual familiarity with Drake's music.) On June 26, Tsunami Label Group will release Drake's *Family Tree*—which, like *New Moon*, culls rare recordings that capture a tragic artist at the onset of a promising career.

Dinosaur Jr.
Beyond
(Fat Possum)
Rock

It's been 20 years since Dinosaur Jr.'s innovative *You're Living All Over Me*, a 34-minute blast of Neil Young-inspired guitar frenzy that blended punk with classic rock. Can this reunion album—the first since 1988 with original bassist Lou Barlow—live up to *Living*? Of course not. But it's still worth hearing, with J Mascis' guitar as blistering as ever and the group's considerable energy undiminished. Though too long at 50 minutes, *Beyond* is an often thrilling reminder of this essential band's heyday. **B+** *—Rob Brunner*
>DOWNLOAD THIS:
"Almost Ready"

Perry Farrell's Satellite Party
Ultra Payloaded
(Columbia)
Rock

If the phrase "rave-rock album featuring Jane's Addiction vocalist Perry Farrell and ex–Extreme guitarist Nuno Bettencourt, with help from the late Jim Morrison" strikes you as a punchline rather than a viable concept, you're not alone. But don't laugh too hard. Laced with wacky musical allusions (Rare Earth, the Bee Gees) and Bettencourt's white-hot solos, this debut is worth a spin. We especially dig "Woman in the Window," a spaced-out tune built around a previously unheard Morrison vocal snippet. **B–** *—Tom Sinclair*
>DOWNLOAD THIS:
"Mr. Sunshine"

Amel Larrieux
Lovely Standards
(Bliss Life)
R&B

Larrieux kicks off *Standards* promisingly with "If I Were a Bell," a kooky classic that brings out her playful side. Still, the chanteuse has been predisposed to melancholy ever since she began her career in the neo-soul precursors Groove Theory. This disc, sadly, stays that course. Larrieux handles ballads like Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Something Wonderful" with appropriate tenderness—but were she to tackle more upbeat numbers (say, a jaunty Cole Porter joint), this lovely set would gain some much-needed sass. **C** *—Neil Drumming*
>DOWNLOAD THIS:
"I Like the Sunrise"

Richmond Fontaine
Thirteen Cities
(El Cortez)
Rock

Long journeys, lonely people, and beautiful desert-rock tunes predominate on this quartet's seventh CD. The big-skied, occasionally mariachi-infused result has cameos from notables like Calexico's Joey Burns. It also showcases the literary ambitions of frontman Willy Vlautin, whose first novel, *Motel Life*, was published earlier this year and whose economic Raymond Carver-esque way with words only seems to fail him here in the song-titling department (see "$87 and a Guilty Conscience That Gets Worse the Longer I Go"). **B+** *—Clark Collis*
>DOWNLOAD THIS:
"Four Walls"

KRS-One and Marley Marl
Hip Hop Lives
(Koch Records)
Rap

When Nas named his 2006 album *Hip Hop Is Dead*, he ruffled feathers—especially graying ones. Respected vets KRS-One and producer Marley Marl team up to dispute the claim, but as life affirmations go, theirs is weak. While KRS, now in his 40s, still wields a walloping, spartan flow, he employs it mostly to boast of his own relevance. Marley's tracks thump but don't escalate. Where are the surprises demonstrating genuine vitality? Without innovation, hip-hop still lives—but boy, does it show its age. **C** *—ND*
>DOWNLOAD THIS:
"Kill a Rapper"

SMITH: PHIL KNOTT/CORBIS OUTLINE; DRAKE: KEITH MORRIS/GETTY IMAGES

Dungen
Tio Bitar
(Kemado)
Rock

The radiantly retro sound of 2005's *Ta det lugnt* (*Take It Easy*) made these Scandinavian psych-rockers unexpected indie darlings in the U.S. Their follow-up, which translates as *Ten Songs*, doesn't tinker much with its predecessor's mesmerizing formula: two parts screaming riffs to one part placid chamber pop. Once again, English speakers need not understand a lick of Swedish to enjoy the music's universally mind-expanding effects. **A–** *—SVL*
>DOWNLOAD THIS:
"Du Ska Inte Tro Att Det Ordnar Sig" ("You Shouldn't Expect It to Work Out")

Lavender Diamond
Imagine Our Love
(Matador)
Folk-Pop

With her ethereal looks and winsome sound, frontwoman Becky Stark is a postmillennial Lady of the Canyon, flitting between Joni Mitchell's vintage filigree and the dreamcatcher dazzle of the current freak-folk movement (Devendra Banhart et al.). As the beatific carat at the center of the L.A.-based band, Stark teeters occasionally toward nouveau-hippie excess. But *Imagine* still sighs and quivers exquisitely, a melodic sunbeam of jangly instrumentation and sweet sentiment. **B+** *—Leah Greenblatt*
>DOWNLOAD THIS:
"Open Your Heart"

Richard Thompson
Sweet Warrior
(Shout! Factory)
Rock

The title of Thompson's latest CD neatly encapsulates the onetime Fairport Convention guitarist-singer-songwriter's enduring appeal. The guy's a six-string hero whose artistic sweep runs from plangent ballads ("She Sang Angels to Rest") to fiery barnstormers ("I'll Never Give It Up") to, well, a heap of engaging styles in between (check out the infectious ska shuffle "Francesca"). That he also consistently imbues his compositions with lyrics and melodies that shimmer with humor and humanism is but the ambrosial icing. **A–** *—TS*
>DOWNLOAD THIS:
"Dad's Gonna Kill Me"

What's That Song?

TRAILERS THAT ROCK

1. The teaser for *I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry*, starring Kevin James and Adam Sandler, kicks off with Spinners and Hall & Oates tracks, followed by **MIKA**'s "Grace Kelly."

2. Strains of the '06 indie anthem "The Funeral" from **BAND OF HORSES** soar while images of Christina Ricci and Reese Witherspoon fill the screen during the clip for *Penelope*.

3. Aaron Eckhart and Catherine Zeta-Jones flirt shamelessly to the tune of **LIZ PHAIR**'s ballad "Count on My Love" in the ad for their rom-com, *No Reservations*.

4. Instrumental offerings from **SHAWN LEE** inject some soul into the *Ocean's Thirteen* preview, which features heist men Matt Damon, George Clooney, and Brad Pitt. *—LG*

THE CHART

TOP ALBUMS

1 **LINKIN PARK**

The Park squad put it in drive, selling 623K to handily beat Norah's 405K figure as '07's best bow.

THE TOP 20

		LAST WEEK	WEEKS ON CHART
1	**LINKIN PARK** *Minutes to Midnight*, Machine Shop/Warner Bros.	–	1
2	**TANK** *Sex, Love & Pain*, Blackground *Tank was surely feeling little pain upon hearing that his third album debuted in second place with 103K units, thanks largely to the lady-pleasing urban hit "Please Don't Go."*	–	1
3	**MICHAEL BUBLÉ** *Call Me Irresponsible*, Reprise	1	3
4	**WILCO** *Sky Blue Sky*, Nonesuch *Wilco's sixth studio album is the rockers' most conventional-sounding in a while, and fans didn't punish them for laying off the esoterica. 'Sky' sold 87K, even better than the 81K 'A Ghost Is Born' opened with three years ago.*	–	1
5	**GRETCHEN WILSON** *One of the Boys*, Columbia Nashville *Those redneck women aren't yelling "Hell, yeah" quite as loudly as before. Wilson's third album moved 73K units, less than a third of the 264K her previous disc bowed with in the fall of 2005.*	–	1
6	**AVRIL LAVIGNE** *The Best Damn Thing*, RCA	5	5
7	**NE-YO** *Because of You*, Def Jam	4	3
8	**MEGADETH** *United Abominations*, Roadrunner	–	1
9	**BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY** *Strength & Loyalty*, Full Surface/Interscope	2	2
10	**DAUGHTRY** *Daughtry*, RCA	6	26
11	**CARRIE UNDERWOOD** *Some Hearts*, Arista Nashville	8	79
12	**AMY WINEHOUSE** *Back to Black*, Universal Republic	14	10
13	**TAYLOR SWIFT** *Taylor Swift*, Big Machine	15	30
14	**BOBBY VALENTINO** *Special Occasion*, Disturbing Tha Peace/Def Jam	3	2
15	**AKON** *Konvicted*, SRC/Universal Motown	12	27
16	**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *NOW That's What I Call Music! Vol. 24*, Capitol	10	8
17	**TIM McGRAW** *Let It Go*, Curb	11	8
18	**FERGIE** *The Dutchess*, Interscope	18	35
19	**RASCAL FLATTS** *Me and My Gang*, Lyric Street	22	59
20	**ELLIOTT YAMIN** *Elliott Yamin*, Hickory	67	9

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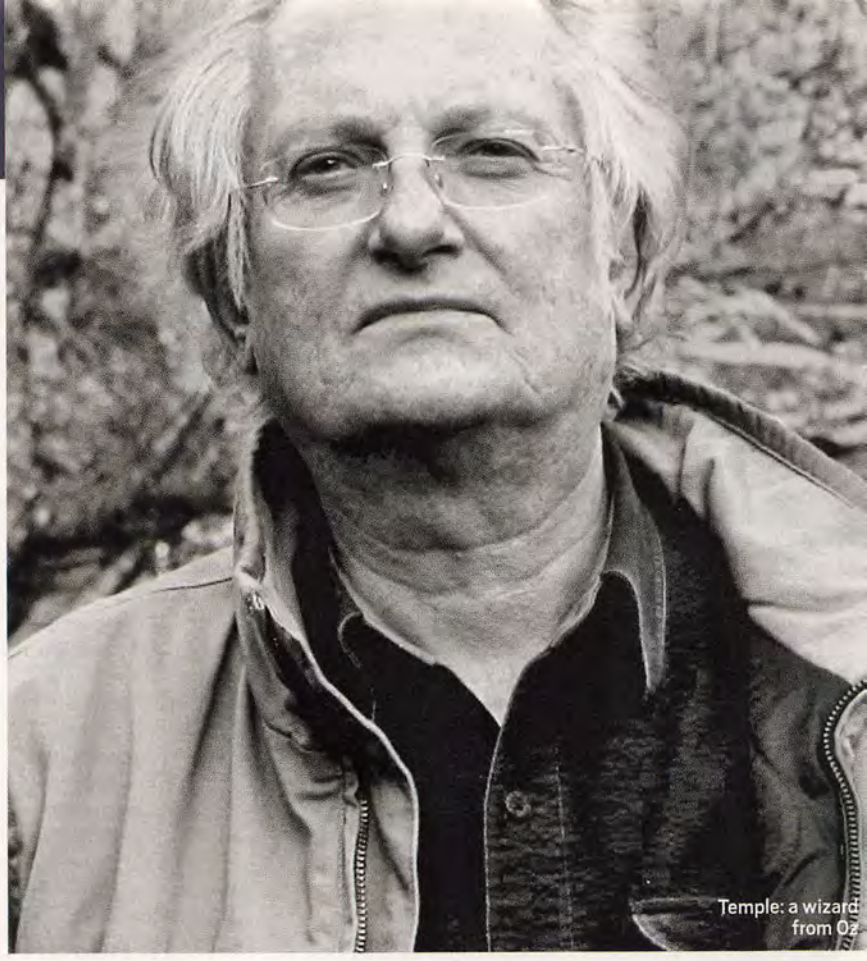
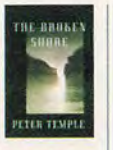
'Shore' Thing

Set outside Melbourne, Peter Temple's sophisticated new thriller had us at g'day.

BY JENNIFER REESE



Temple: a wizard from Oz



The Broken Shore
Peter Temple
Thriller

I may forget the twists from Ian Rankin's thrillers, but never the crepuscular gloom of his Edinburgh. The same goes for Denise Mina's boozy, hard-bitten Glasgow, James Lee Burke's comparatively bucolic Louisiana bayou, John Burdett's steamy Bangkok, and George Pelecanos' tragic Washington, D.C. The novels may be driven by plot, but they are grounded in a profound, even poetic, sense of place.

New to my list of memorable thriller locations: Peter Temple's southern Australia. Little known in the United States but a major award winner Down Under, Temple writes mostly about Melbourne, a city blessed with weather that inspires "introspective mediocrity and suicidal failure." His latest novel to be published here, *The Broken Shore*, is set not in the metropolis itself but in the surrounding countryside, where the climate is every bit as dispiriting and the roads are "smeared with roadkill—birds, foxes, rabbits, cats, rats, a young kangaroo with small arms outstretched."

There's no place like home, and world-weary big-city cop Joe Cashin ("With hindsight, I see most of my life as an error of judgment") has returned to his family's derelict farm to heal vague psychic and physical wounds. Drawing a paycheck from the local cop shop, Cashin enjoys chilling to Plácido Domingo, drinking beer, and walking his two ebullient "black as liquorice" dogs. In this fictional Podunk town, he's not sure who has "the Grip"—"the power to hurt...and to stop anyone hurting you"—and he doesn't much care. Until, like just about every broken cop in the history of crime lit, he is forced to repair himself by taking on a dangerous new case.

And this one is a whopper. A prominent local citizen is flogged with a bamboo stick, bashed on the head, and left for dead in a house that smells of vinegar. From a single corpse, Temple spins a complicated mystery that eventually encompasses racial tensions, scumbag cops, drugs, a grandstanding aborigine politician, stomach-turning sexual abuse, and rapacious developers. There's also a stock romance with a pretty lawyer for Cashin, some thorny family history, and a lot of snappy banter with a gay café owner.

Flinty, funny, subtle, and smart, *The Broken Shore* sags under the burden of a few too many narrative complications and, like many a top-drawer mystery, collapses toward the end, as the haunting questions, so elegantly posed, are suddenly and a little awkwardly answered. But this is a hazard of the genre, and Temple ranks among its very best practitioners. **B+**

Backstory

+ In the U.S. edition of *The Broken Shore*, Temple includes an amusing seven-page glossary of the novel's Australian slang. A bloodhouse, for instance, is "a hotel known for its fights." A chook is a chicken, an older woman, or a "silly person." And the expression "Nice day for travelling" means "You're fired."

TEMPLE: CANDY BRYCE; MAP: MAPS.COM/CORBIS

Lethally Blond
Kate White
Mystery

After losing both her boyfriend and her cushy job at a glossy women's magazine, Bailey Weggins rebounds as a freelance celeb crime reporter for a supermarket tabloid. Then a former-model beau—now a rising prime-time TV hottie—enlists her to locate a missing friend/castmate. *Sex and the City* meets *Dirt* as the intrepid Weggins prowls the streets—and high-thread-count bedsheets—of Manhattan in her investigation. Sprinkled with industry jargon, dry wit, and au courant pop culture references ("Snow Patrol was singing 'Chasing Cars'"), the fifth entry in *Cosmo* editor White's Weggins series is smart, stylish, and sometimes silly. **B+** —*Margeaux Watson*

Out Stealing Horses
Per Petterson
Novel

The simple, bleak premise—a 67-year-old man named Trond moves to a remote cabin in eastern Norway and meditates on his youth—sounds like any number of snowy Ingmar Bergman films. Indeed, *Horses* seldom relinquishes its eerily quiet tone, even when Trond's memories take detours into violent tragedy, logging expeditions, and WWII espionage. Petterson fluently jumbles his chronology, sustaining mysteries within several subplots and vivifying evergreen ideas about determinism and the bonds of family. But the real trick is in the way everything finally, neatly converges into an emotional jolt. **A** —*Sean Howe*

Stealing the Wave
Andy Martin
Nonfiction

Jon Krakauer's 1995 article on Mark Foo in *Outside* was the *Into Thin Air* of surf stories: Foo, a famed big-wave surfer, was killed in late 1994 while taking his first runs on the Maverick's break off Northern California's coast. Here, Martin elevates that tragedy to near mythological proportions, chronicling how Foo's rivalry with fellow boarder Ken Bradshaw pushed him to that fatal brink. In lush, dramatic terms, he recounts what feels like every wave ridden during the duo's two decades of competition on Hawaii's intense North Shore. It's a bit of overkill, certainly, but surf enthusiasts and wannabes alike will probably get sucked in. **B+** —*Whitney Pastorek*

Divisadero
Michael Ondaatje
Novel

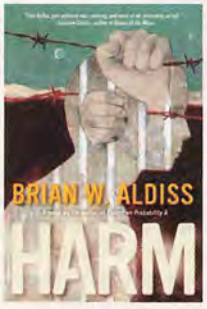
Anna and her adopted sister, Claire, grow up on an idyllic California farm with their taciturn father, riding horses through the rolling hills and watching meteor showers. But when teenage Anna starts sleeping with Coop, a young hired hand, their father violently lashes out, irrevocably dividing both the family and this annoyingly elliptical novel. Anna runs away and becomes a scholar; Coop runs away and takes up poker. Instead of boring deeper into the lives of these blurry characters, Ondaatje (*The English Patient*) abruptly launches into the story of a dead French writer. The juxtaposition probably means something, but it's hard to motivate yourself to figure out what. **B–** —*JR*

Your Body Is Changing
Jack Pendarvis
Story Collection
PAPERBACK

In the story "Outsiders," a boorish Alabaman–cum–New York hipster tells people, "Oh, I will call you on your s---! It's what I do!" In this riotous collection—recalling David Sedaris' fictive *Barrel Fever* entries—Pendarvis precisely captures such identifiably irritating personae. Slick admen brag about their "radical" promotion for a gum that gives you the runs, while a slacker drug mule rationalizes smoking the hash block he was hired to deliver. Pendarvis' wit sometimes veers too far into the absurd, but he often surprises a giggling reader by nailing the emptiness of his characters' self-absorption. **B+** —*Josh Wolk*

What's New in...Fantasy and Sci-Fi

ALTERNATIVE ROCKIN' WORLDS



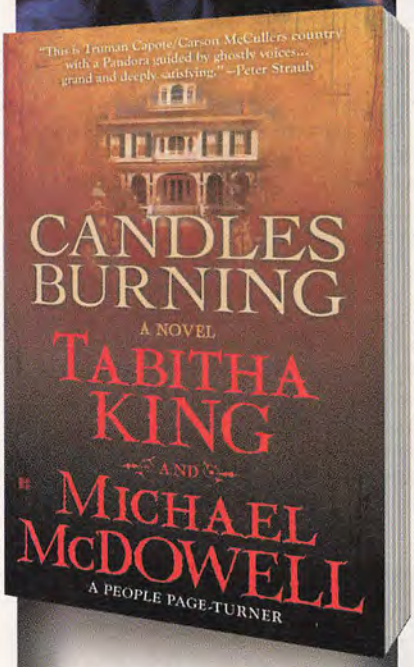
HARM
Brian W. Aldiss Imprisoned for a jokey paragraph about killing the prime minister, British novelist Paul Ali endures brutal torture by imagining himself on a planet where humans have domesticated giant insects. **For Fans of...** *1984*; *A Bug's Life*. **Bottom Line** Aldiss' dystopian chops—his 1969 story "Super-Toys Last All Summer Long" inspired Steven Spielberg's *A.I.*—falter in this unsubtle vision of a paranoid West that persecutes Muslim minorities and arthropods alike. **B–** —*Will Boisvert*

FLESH AND SPIRIT
Carol Berg Valen, a dyslexic sorcerer on the run from his abusive family, takes refuge in a monastery, bringing a book of maps that can lead humans into the shadowy home of the supernatural Danae. Unfortunately, he can't read it. Can he find a way to preserve civilization from fanatics and warring princes? **For Fans of...** George R.R. Martin; Anne Bishop. **Bottom Line** Moments of colorful intensity highlight this workmanlike coming-of-age adventure. **B** —*Polly Shulman*

BRASYL
Ian McDonald A modern reality TV producer, an aspiring mogul from a seedy near-future hood, an 18th-century Jesuit missionary, and other assorted Brazilians uncover a vast conspiracy involving quantum physics and parallel realities. **For Fans of...** Philip K. Dick's paranoid philosophizing; *City of God*'s urban squalor. **Bottom Line** Packing his pages with local color and big-picture speculation, McDonald conjures three equally vivid worlds. **B+** —*Simon Vozick-Levinson*

IN WAR TIMES
Kathleen Ann Goonan A brilliant scientist seduces a WWII soldier, giving him the plans to a device that could eradicate mankind's predilection for conflict. **For Fans of...** Dick's *Man in the High Castle*; *Quantum Leap*. **Bottom Line** Goonan weaves experimental jazz, particle physics, and biochemistry into a compelling adventure through alternate universes. But her interdisciplinary mystery unravels as theory gives way to sentimentality and antiwar hokum. **B–** —*Neil Drumming*

An extraordinary saga of Southern gothic horror...


"This is Truman Capote/Carson McCullers country with a Pandora guided by ghostly voices... grand and deeply satisfying." —Peter Straub
CANDLES BURNING
A NOVEL
TABITHA KING
AND
MICHAEL McDOWELL
A PEOPLE PAGE-TURNER

"This is Truman Capote/Carson McCullers country with a Pandora guided by ghostly voices...grand and deeply satisfying."
—Peter Straub

"Moves at a hypnotic pace, like an Alabama water moccasin slipping through black water."
—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

"A modern-day witch tale."
—*Portland (ME) Press Herald*

"Spooky...shivery fun."
—*Tampa Tribune*

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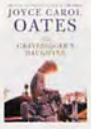
Character Studies

Geeks of the world, unite! In **Fandomania** *(Aperture, $35)*, photographer Elena Dorfman shines a light on the offbeat world of "cosplay"—people who dress in elaborate costumes to role-play as their favorite characters from movies, videogames, and Japanese cartoons. Above, Ashley suits up as the Green Fairy from Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge*, while Ann dons fox ears to portray the fox demon Yoko Kurama from the manga/anime series *YuYu Hakusho*. —*Karen Leigh*

The Gravedigger's Daughter

Joyce Carol Oates

Novel

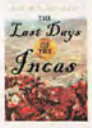


Oates holds the patent on searing tales of battered women struggling to overcome tough circumstances. Here, she gives us another steely survivor, Rebecca Schwart, the eponymous gravedigger's daughter, whose parents fled Nazi Germany only to meet a grisly, self-inflicted fate in upstate New York. The tale opens in 1959, when Rebecca is disastrously married to an abusive charmer with whom she has a small son. The prose gallops along on a loose rein—perhaps too loose. At 582 pages, the narrative can be slack and repetitive, but Oates confidently delivers another very American saga of lurid misfortune. **B+** —*Karen Karbo*

The Last Days of the Incas

Kim MacQuarrie

Nonfiction



Half a millennium ago, a small group of Spaniards tricked, manipulated, and murdered their way to total domination over the Peruvian Incas. In this thrillingly informative work, MacQuarrie relates how, with the help of metal weapons, artillery, disease, and horses ("the mobile tanks of the conquest"), the Spanish subdued a native populace despite being outnumbered nearly 10,000 to 1. In addition to writing rousing and clear-eyed battle accounts and describing the Incas' early form of guerrilla warfare, MacQuarrie also manages to spin the oft-told story of the discovery of Machu Picchu into narrative gold. **A–** —*Gilbert Cruz*

School's Out

Christophe Dufossé

Novel

PAPERBACK

Middle school is hell—even in France. When a teacher is found dead outside his classroom window in an apparent suicide, 32-year-old Pierre Hoffman is tapped to fill in. Pierre soon learns of two other mysterious deaths linked to this class of oddly well-behaved 13-year-olds who speak like "trainee semiotician[s]." Dufossé effectively builds a sense of menace, particularly in the run-up to a class bus trip to Normandy. Although Pierre's narration can be off-puttingly aloof (perhaps Shaun Whiteside's rather stilted translation is to blame), *School's Out* is the literary version of a *citron pressé*: mouth-puckeringly tart and refreshing. **B+** —*Thom Geier*

FANDOMANIA: ELENA DORFMAN/APERTURE FOUNDATION

Play Dead
David Rosenfelt
Mystery

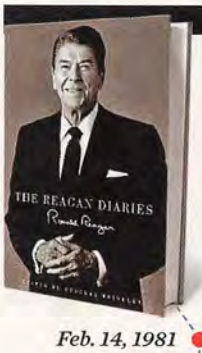
Talk about muzzling a witness. When dog-loving attorney Andy Carpenter successfully appeals to spare a golden retriever from the gas chamber, he learns the pooch may be the key to a high-profile murder trial from five years earlier. Before you can say "roll over," Carpenter's been shot at by any of a number of suspects: a shady operator from the Newark docks, a Jersey Mob boss, or someone with considerable pull at the Pentagon. Rosenfelt concocts a taut thriller full of whiplash plot twists and wisecracking dialogue from Carpenter's *Godfather*-quoting partner, proving that he's long since earned his crime-novelist pedigree. **B+** *—Bob Cannon*

A Day at the Beach
Helen Schulman
Novel

A 9/11 backdrop is no longer original. But using 9/11 as analogy is risky, potentially exploitative. In this entrancing tale of 24 hours in a troubled marriage, Schulman writes about that day with journalistic detachment (doggedly matter-of-fact descriptions of brushing teeth or pouring coffee); yet she exhibits an artist's eye for detail—likening repetitive TV news footage to the iconography of Jasper Johns, using René Magritte to illustrate a surreal burst of daylight ("it emanated from the ground instead of the sky"). As for the intriguingly ambiguous ending, the possibilities could provide material for two more novels. **A–** *—Melissa Rose Bernardo*

White Corridor
Christopher Fowler
Mystery

In *White Corridor*, Christopher Fowler takes his two aging London police detectives Arthur Bryant (eccentric and spiritual—imagine poet W.H. Auden as a copper) and John May (rational, a tad high-strung) into the countryside. There, trapped in their car in a snowstorm, they discover a psychopath lurking among the other weather-bound vehicles. Meanwhile, back at their station house, the rest of their crew susses out clues in a devilish locked-room murder. The opportunities to lapse into cozy cuteness abound, but Fowler, like his crime-solvers, is deadpan, sly, and always unexpectedly inventive. **B+** *—Ken Tucker*



Reagan Redux

FILM CRITIC IN CHIEF

Ronald Reagan saw a lot during his presidency: perestroika in the USSR, the Iran-Contra affair, and...*Cocoon: The Return*? Global issues aside, the newly issued **Reagan Diaries** reveal the Gipper's take on some of the 70-plus films he screened while in office. *—Adam Markovitz*

Feb. 14, 1981 **Nine to Five** "Funny—but one scene made me mad. A truly funny scene if the 3 gals had played getting drunk but no they had to get stoned on pot. It was an endorsement of Pot smoking for any young person who sees the picture."

Dec. 5, 1981 **Reds** "...a most imaginative job."

Feb. 13, 1982 **Inchon** "...a brutal but gripping picture about the Korean War and for once we're the good guys and the Communists are the villains. The producer was Japanese or Korean which probably explains the preceding sentence."

March 19, 1982 **Das Boot** "A German movie of a WWII submarine crew. Very good but strange to find yourself rooting for the enemy."

June 12, 1982 **Health** [Robert Altman's satire] "The world's worst movie."

Aug. 13, 1982 **An Officer and a Gentleman** "Good story spoiled by nudity, language & sex."

Oct. 5, 1984 **Country** [Oscar-nominated farm drama with Jessica Lange] "...a blatant propaganda message against our Agri. programs."

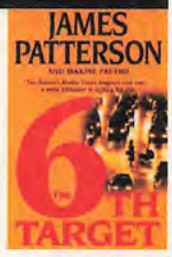
Jan. 19, 1986 **The Color Purple** "A magnificent job of picture making."

THE CHARTS

HARDCOVER BEST-SELLERS

1 **THE 6TH TARGET**

With a print run of 1 million, *Target* was right on, sending *Simple Genius*—the No. 1 best-seller for the past two weeks—into the No. 2 slot.



FICTION TOP 10

		WEEKS ON LIST
1	**THE 6TH TARGET** James Patterson and Maxine Paetro *Patterson—who last hit No. 1 in February with 'Step on a Crack'—returns with the sixth installment of his Women's Murder Club books. Here, the crime-stopping ladies try to curtail a slew of San Francisco kidnappings that aim for kids and their nannies. Fans take note: The 'Women's Murder Club' series, starring Angie Harmon, debuts on ABC Fridays this fall.*	1
2	**SIMPLE GENIUS** David Baldacci	3
3	**THE YIDDISH POLICEMEN'S UNION** Michael Chabon	2
4	**I HEARD THAT SONG BEFORE** Mary Higgins Clark	6
5	**THE WOODS** Harlan Coben	4
6	**THE CHILDREN OF HÚRIN** J.R.R. Tolkien	4
7	**RANT** Chuck Palahniuk	2
8	**NINETEEN MINUTES** Jodi Picoult	10
9	**BODY SURFING** Anita Shreve	3
10	**THE GOOD HUSBAND OF ZEBRA DRIVE** Alexander McCall Smith *Director Anthony Minghella ('Cold Mountain') will begin production in July on the TV pilot for book No. 1 in McCall Smith's 'No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency' series.*	4

NONFICTION TOP 10

		WEEKS ON LIST
1	**THE SECRET** Rhonda Byrne	19
2	**EINSTEIN** Walter Isaacson	5
3	**AT THE CENTER OF THE STORM** George Tenet	2
4	**PAULA DEEN: IT AIN'T ALL ABOUT THE COOKIN'** Paula Deen with Sherry Suib	5
5	**THE DANGEROUS BOOK FOR BOYS** Conn and Hal Iggulden *The authors expected an uproar over their how-to guide, which includes tips on making a slingshot and building a go-cart. Instead, it's a hit and has gone back to press five times.*	2
6	**GOD IS NOT GREAT** Christopher Hitchens	2
7	**ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, MIRACLE** Barbara Kingsolver with Steven L. Hopp and Camille Kingsolver	2
8	**REPOSITION YOURSELF** T.D. Jakes	1
9	**A LONG WAY GONE** Ishmael Beah	13
10	**EVERYDAY PASTA** Giada De Laurentiis	6

SOURCE: *PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*, WEEK OF MAY 8–14, 2007

Give 'Em Elle

Little Miss Woods gets a shallow, sugar-sweet musical-comedy makeover.

BY NICHOLAS FONSECA

Beauty shop buds Orfeh and Bundy

Legally Blonde
Laura Bell Bundy, Christian Borle
Broadway

Legally Blonde is a jolt to the system, a squealing musical celebration of the can-do American spirit. It's a two-and-a-half-hour Red Bull high, and if that description seems like a stretch, it's only in keeping with this brand-heavy blowout. JetBlue, Match.com, UPS...they also get shout-outs. Even the *Playbill* informs audiences that Elle's onstage dorm room was "furnished by Pottery Barn Teen."

It makes sense that Elle Woods ended up a corporate shill on Broadway, where she's peddling the same quirky girl-power ethos that turned the 2001 film (starring Reese Witherspoon) into a touchstone for the iPod generation. It goes something like this: "Use your brain and reach for the stars, girlfriend! But join a sorority and be sure to land a boyfriend, too!" This worldview is both admirable and disheartening, and it extends all the way to the gift stand, where fans can purchase low-rise sweatpants with "Omigod" printed across the butt cheeks.

Not that this *Blonde* doesn't have ambition, charm, or even a healthy message up its designer sleeves. The show simply gets mired in too much frippery along the way. Laura Bell Bundy explodes on stage in the middle of the raucous opening, "Omigod You Guys," and her energy never flags. As Elle, the vacant girly-girl who heads for Harvard Law School to impress her ex, Warner (a wily Richard H. Blake), she displays nimble comic timing and strong singing in a role that's—let's face it—pretty one-note. She hits every complicated mark in the awe-inspiring "What You Want," a marching-band barnstormer that serves as ever-creative Elle's official "admissions essay." And her crackling presence elevates Elle's first day in class with slimy Professor Callahan (Michael Rupert), who's looking for "four young sharks with the dorsal fin."

Unfortunately, this all takes place long before intermission. Act 2 promises big things with "Whipped Into Shape," a wonderfully campy ode to female prisoners and jump rope. (Trust me, it works.) But things begin to fall apart by the time Elle teaches manicurist Paulette (Orfeh) how to bend and snap. Book writer Heather Hach relies too heavily on the built-in fan base's favorite moments and one-liners for laughs. Rather than taming the film's over-the-top tendencies, she embraces them wholeheartedly—to the show's detriment. Paulette's strange obsession with the Emerald Isle leads to an inevitable Riverdance spoof, the histrionic courtroom ditty "There! Right There!" flirts with dated gay stereotypes, and the title song proves wholly unmemorable. Like Elle and her dizzy Delta Nu sisters, this *Blonde* exhausts more than it exhilarates. It's enough to leave you reaching for a Red Bull. (Tickets: 212-307-4100) **B–**

Backstory

+ Four-legged scene-stealers Chico (who plays Bruiser, Elle's Chihuahua) and Chloe (a.k.a. Paulette's bulldog Rufus, above) both came from shelters. That's where Broadway animal trainer Bill Berloni finds all his canine stars.

LEGALLY BLONDE: PAUL KOLNIK; CHLOE: BRUCE GLIKAS/STO

Meet the Prez

Nixon gets his comeuppance (again) in this thrilling tête-à-tête.

BY STEVE DALY

Frost/Nixon
Frank Langella, Michael Sheen
Broadway

Ostensibly, it was an interview. But when fading TV personality David Frost sat down to videotape nearly 30 hours of chat with disgraced ex-president Richard M. Nixon in 1977 (subsequently compressed into four 90-minute syndicated programs), the British-born Frost served as more than an interviewer. He became a prosecutor, wresting from Nixon a mea culpa for Watergate and turning their encounter into a cause célèbre mix of trial, bullfight, and boxing match.

For years, TV-drama writer Peter Morgan dreamed of making the showdown a play. Before he gained international attention with big-screen scripts (for *The Queen* and *The Last King of Scotland*), he managed to get *Frost/Nixon*, his playwriting debut, up and running in London, where it drew accolades in the 251-seat Donmar Warehouse. On Broadway it's less intimate but no less acclaimed, and still under Michael Grandage's brisk direction. So is Morgan as adept at stagecraft as he is at writing for film and TV? Not yet, given his reliance on supporting expositors who aren't really characters.

But why quibble when you've got such superb stars? Frank Langella will likely grab a Tony for bringing a puckish sense of humor to Nixon's self-pitying patter. And Michael Sheen, shamefully overlooked for a Tony nod, finds every gradation of glib fatuosity in Frost's social climbing. Catch it before Ron Howard's movie version homogenizes the whole thing. (212-239-6200) **A–**

FROST/NIXON, 110 IN THE SHADE: SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX; THE COLOR PURPLE: PAUL KOLNIK; DEUCE: JOAN MARCUS; RADIO GOLF: LOVEMUSIK: CAROL ROSEGG

The Color Purple
Broadway

Three years after winning *American Idol*, Fantasia (she dropped Barrino long ago) steps into the Oprahfied musical version of Alice Walker's 1982 book. As the tragic Celie—who endures incest, beatings, and teen pregnancies—the star lands every line and hits all the right notes. But she's cold and robotic, and never becomes the sprawling show's much-needed emotional touchstone. Her rich, suitably scratchy voice is one saving grace: By the time Celie finds salvation with the bombastic ballad "I'm Here," you'll be glad Fantasia is...but you'll also wish she'd go back to making pop music. (212-239-6200) **C** *—Karen Leigh*

Deuce
Broadway

Terrence McNally commits a double fault with *Deuce*, a painless trifle about famous former pro-tennis partners starring Marian Seldes and, in her first Broadway offering in 24 years, Angela Lansbury. There is no reason for this production to exist except to bask in the glow of these two theatrical grande dames, and their instincts and timing are still razor sharp. But why McNally's 95-minute effort is so thinly conceived and stagnant—literally; the women rarely rise from their U.S. Open seats—is a mystery even Jessica Fletcher couldn't solve. (212-239-6200) **C+** *—Jason Clark*

Radio Golf
Broadway

An unflagging optimism permeates the final entry in the late August Wilson's astounding 10-play, 10-decade ode to 20th-century African-American life. "This is 1997," declares Pittsburgh mayoral hopeful Harmond Wilks (Harry Lennix). "This is America. This is the land of opportunity." His associate is named Roosevelt (James A. Williams). The two even sing a snippet of the cheery "Blue Skies." That *Golf* lacks the gravity of, say, *Fences* or *Seven Guitars* isn't the issue. It's that Kenny Leon's production lacks drive. Like the game, *Golf* is elegant, orderly, and a bit of a yawn. (212-239-6200) **B** *—Melissa Rose Bernardo*

110 in the Shade
Broadway

For a show set during a long arid drought in 1930s Texas, *Shade* gives off surprisingly little heat. Four-time Tony winner Audra McDonald is effervescent as Lizzie Curry, a spinster torn between a repressed sheriff (Christopher Innvar) and a rain-promising con artist (Steve Kazee). But the leading men can't match her fiery performance, and the musical doesn't explain why Lizzie would fall for either shlub. McDonald is the main draw here, and her musical transformation from dowdy old maid to red-hot lover in "Is It Really Me?" is a powerhouse extreme makeover. (212-719-1300) **B–** *—Paul Katz*

LoveMusik
Broadway

The turbulent marriage of composer Kurt Weill (a convincing Michael Cerveris) and singer/actress/muse Lotte Lenya (Donna Murphy) drives this bio musical, loaded with Weill songs. The couple bicker across three decades and two continents, but we never learn what keeps them together. The tepid romance is further undermined by Harold Prince's listless staging, which leaves dead air between songs and scenes. Still, Murphy's darkly alluring renditions of "Surabaya Johnny" and "September Song" almost make this ponderous show worth seeing. Almost. (212-239-6200) **C–** *—David Barbour*

EW.COM

Funnyman and self-professed "Broadway newbie" Mo Rocca—now starring in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*—riffs on the Tony noms. Read his essay on **EW.COM**. Plus: *High Fidelity* on CD; the latest from Barbara Cook.

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THE FINAL CUT

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

By Mark Harris

In the movie business, there are several ways to spot a lie. Some involve math: For instance, the sentence "The movie was great—it was just marketed badly," which is said every hour in Hollywood, is true exactly 3 percent of the time, whereas "The movie was bad—it was just marketed really well," which is almost never said, is true 97 percent of the time. Some lies are formulaic: Anybody in movies who starts a sentence "At the end of the day..." is clearly revving up the manure spreader. But there's an even more common lie. The sentence "We're just giving the people what they want," when uttered by a studio executive, is always, always untrue. How can you tell? Easy: There's no such thing as "the people." Not anymore.

Late May is a roller-coastery time in pop culture. In TV, the season has just wrapped; we are near the end of *The Sopranos* and *The Shield* and in the middle of *Lost* and at the beginning of *Heroes* and *Friday Night Lights* and *The Tudors* and, depending upon our tastes, following any number of dark, complicated, challenging, years-long story arcs, assessing and arguing about them every week. It's a good moment.

Meanwhile, here's the movie slate in which the studios invested something like $750 million this month: part 3 of a movie based on a comic book. Part 3 of a movie based on a children's book. And part 3 of a movie based on a Disneyland ride.

Not much of a contest, is it?

This is where "We're just giving the people what they want" comes in. It's the defiant lie told by those who want to pretend that their failures of ambition are *your* fault—that because "the people" eat what they're fed, they must like it. The moneymen behind *Spiders of the Shrekibbean* brag about meaningless numbers (*Spider-Man 3* had the *biggest opening weekend of all time!*) and shrink from meaningful ones, like the fact that *Spider-Man 3* cost more and will likely gross less than the first two. And they start planning *Spider-Man 4* because "the people" want it, and try not to listen to the moviegoers saying "Ehh, *3* was okay, the second one was better." Because nothing that anyone says *after* the movie counts.

Don't you hate being referred to as "the people"—as if you were a big mass of grazing cows being herded from one multiplex pasture to the next every week? You don't hear it in TV anymore, because networks know that we've become a niche nation, and we're going to stay that way. We don't all like the same shows; we don't all *want* to like the same shows. When the most popular (and most people-powered) TV series is *American Idol*, and three-quarters of households are happily watching something else every time it's on, talk of "the people" as a unified entity becomes pointless. (It's even pointless on *Idol* itself: Remember when "the people" decided that they liked Taylor Hicks better than Chris Daughtry, and then months later, when their CDs came out, decided they were only kidding?)

It turns out that not caring about "the people" is liberating. It frees you to care about *your* people—the 2 or 5 or 10 million who are passionate about *Friday Night Lights* or *Rescue Me* or *The Wire* or *Battlestar Galactica* or *The Office*, who will stay with your show for as long as it's good, whose enthusiasms and high standards and judgments may even help, indirectly, to make it better.

The problem isn't with American filmmakers, many of whom are doing exciting work right now (wait until fall), but with mainstream-studio-chief thinking. The people who finance big movies are still pretending they're doing it for everyone, but the only segment of "everyone" they're willing to spend enormous sums of money wooing are 15-to-24-year-old males and little kids (and whomever they drag along). The true translation of "We're giving the people what they want" is "We're making the only kind of movies we know how to sell, and we're selling them to the only demographics we know how to sell to." Everyone else is treated as a minority or special-interest group—including women, who get one or two mid-budget films tossed at them per summer (usually the extent of studio thinking about that half of the population is "Um...is Angelina Jolie available?"), and "old people" (in Hollywood, that means all Americans 35 and over), who are brushed off until well after Labor Day.

"The line 'We're just giving the people what they want,' when uttered by a Hollywood studio exec, is always, always untrue."

Will Hollywood notice how many of "the people" are staying home? Not yet—not as long as there are self-serving ways of tabulating actual ticket sales and another *biggest weekend of all time!* around every corner. But if the studios don't figure out that "the people" are a lot more diverse than their movies, they're in for some bad news. Thirty-seven percent* of Americans now feel that "the ultimate movie-watching experience" resides not in a theater but in their own living rooms. That number is going to grow. As it does, maybe the studios will finally have to think about who "the people" actually are—and what we really want. ■

*According to a 2006 MPAA study

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